

The Center for Grassroots Oversight

This page can be viewed at [http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?complete_911_timeline_alleged_al_qaeda_linked_attacks=firstwtcbombing&timeline=complete_911_timeline)

[complete_911_timeline_alleged_al_qaeda_linked_attacks=firstwtcbombing&timeline=complete_911_timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?complete_911_timeline_alleged_al_qaeda_linked_attacks=firstwtcbombing&timeline=complete_911_timeline)

Follow Us!

We are planning some big changes! Please follow us to stay updated and be part of our community.



Complete 911 Timeline

1993 Bombing of the World Trade Center

Project: Complete 911 Timeline

Open-Content project managed by matt, Derek, Paul, KJF, mtuck, paxvector

[add event](#) | [references](#)

January 4, 1984: Alleged Terrorist Plot to Bomb WTC Uncovered



Peter Caram.
[Source: *SRR Training*]

The New York Port Authority, which owns the World Trade Center, is aware of terrorism occurring around the world and that the WTC is vulnerable to attack. It has therefore created the Terrorist Intelligence Unit within its police department, headed by Detective Sergeant Peter Caram, to gather information about terrorist groups and assess the vulnerability of its numerous facilities to attack. On this day, Caram writes a memo to the assistant superintendent of the Port Authority Police Department, reporting that the FBI has uncovered a terrorist threat: Two supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini are allegedly planning to bomb the WTC in the near future. Although the attack never occurs, this is the first of numerous occasions during the 1980s where the WTC is considered a potential target for a terrorist attack. (Caram 2001, pp. 4-5; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004)

January 17, 1984: Port Authority Terrorist Intelligence Unit Issues Report on WTC Security

Detective Sergeant Peter Caram, the head of the New York Port Authority's Terrorist Intelligence Unit, has been directed by the assistant superintendent of the Port Authority Police Department to compile a report on the vulnerability of the WTC to a terrorist attack. Having previously worked at the WTC Command, Caram has exclusive knowledge of some of the center's security weaknesses. On this day he issues his four-page report, titled "Terrorist Threat and Targeting Assessment: World Trade Center." It looks at the reasoning behind why the WTC might be singled out for attack, and identifies three areas of particular vulnerability: the perimeter of the WTC complex, the truck dock entrance, and the subgrade area (the lower floors below ground level). Caram specifically mentions that terrorists could use a car bomb in the subgrade area—a situation similar to what occurs in the 1993 bombing (see February 26, 1993). (Caram 2001, pp. 5, 84-85; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004) This is the first of several reports during the 1980s, identifying the WTC as a potential terrorist target.

Early 1984: Port Authority Establishes Office of Special Planning

Peter Goldmark, the executive director of the New York Port Authority, is concerned that, in light of terrorist attacks occurring around the world (see April 18-October 23, 1983), Port Authority facilities, including the World Trade Center, could become terrorist targets. (Maul 9/28/2005; Hartocollis 10/27/2005) He therefore creates a unit called the Office of Special Planning (OSP) to evaluate the vulnerabilities of all Port Authority facilities and present recommendations to minimize the risks of attack.



Peter Goldmark.
[Source: Environmental
Defense Fund]

The OSP is staffed by Port Authority police and civilian workers, and is headed by Edward O'Sullivan, who has experience in counterterrorism from earlier careers in the Navy and Marine Corps. In carrying out its work, the OSP will consult with such US agencies as the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, NSA, and Defense Department. It will also consult with security officials from other countries that have gained expertise in combating terrorism, such as England, France, Italy, and Israel. (Glanz and Lipton 2004, pp. 226; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004) According to Peter Caram, head of the Port Authority's Terrorist Intelligence Unit, the OSP will develop "an expertise unmatched in the United States." (Caram 2001, pp. 12) In 1985 it will issue a report called "Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center" (see November 1985). (New York Court of Appeals 2/16/1999) It will exist until 1987. (Solnik 1/5/2000)

(Between Early 1984 and October 1985): Office of Special Planning Studies Vulnerability of WTC to Terrorist Attack

The Office of Special Planning (OSP), a unit set up by the New York Port Authority to assess the security of its facilities against terrorist attacks (see Early 1984), spends four to six months studying the World Trade Center. It examines the center's design through looking at photographs, blueprints, and plans. It brings in experts such as the builders of the center, plus experts in sabotage and explosives, and has them walk through the WTC to identify any areas of vulnerability. According to New York Times reporters James Glanz and Eric Lipton, when Edward O'Sullivan, head of the OSP, looks at WTC security, he finds "one vulnerability after another. Explosive charges could be placed at key locations in the power system. Chemical or biological agents could be dropped into the coolant system. The Hudson River water intake could be blown up. Someone might even try to infiltrate the large and vulnerable subterranean realms of the World Trade Center site." In particular, "There was no control at all over access to the underground, two-thousand-car parking garage." However, O'Sullivan consults "one of the trade center's original structural engineers, Les Robertson, on whether the towers would collapse because of a bomb or a collision with a slow-moving airplane." He is told there is "little likelihood of a collapse no matter how the building was attacked." (Glanz and Lipton 2004, pp. 227; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004) The OSP will issue its report called "Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center" late in 1985 (see November 1985).

July 1985: Report Outlines Terrorism Threat to WTC



Charles Schnabolk.
[Source: Institute for
Design Professionals]

While the Office of Special Planning is still working on its report about the vulnerability of the World Trade Center to terrorist attack, the New York Port Authority hired security consultant Charles Schnabolk to also review the center's security systems. (Reeves 10/12/2001; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004) Schnabolk was involved in designing the original security system when the WTC complex was built. (Institute for Design Professionals 2009; The Security Design Group 2010) This month his secret report, titled "Terrorism Threat Perspective and Proposed Response for the World Trade Center" is released. It sets out four levels of possible terrorism against the center, and gives examples of each: "(1) PREDICTABLE—Bomb threats; (2) PROBABLE—Bombing attempts, computer crime; (3) POSSIBLE—Hostage taking; (4) CATASTROPHIC—Aerial bombing, chemical agents in water supply or air conditioning (caused by agents of a foreign government or a programmed suicide)." Similar to other reports in the mid-1980s, it also warns that the WTC "is highly vulnerable through the parking lot." (Reeves 10/12/2001; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004)

November 1985: Office of Special Planning Report Calls WTC a 'Most Attractive Terrorist Target'

After assessing the security of New York Port Authority facilities, the Office of Special Planning (OSP), the Port Authority's own antiterrorist task force, releases a report called "Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center." For security purposes, only seven copies are made, being hand-delivered and signed for by its various recipients, including the executive director of the Port Authority, the superintendent of

the Port Authority Police, and the director of the World Trade Department. (New York Court of Appeals 2/16/1999; Solnik 1/5/2000) Because of the WTC's visibility, symbolic value, and it being immediately recognizable to people from around the world, the report concludes that the center is a "most attractive terrorist target." (New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004) The report, which is 120 pages long, lists various possible methods of attacking the center. (New York Court of Appeals 2/16/1999; Caram 2001, pp. 103; Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 87) One of these is that a "time bomb-laden vehicle could be driven into the WTC and parked in the public parking area.... At a predetermined time, the bomb could be exploded in the basement." (Glanz and Lipton 2004, pp. 227) As a Senate Committee Report will find in August 1993, "The specifics of the February 26, 1993 bombing at the World Trade Center garage were almost identical to those envisioned in the [OSP] report." (New York Court of Appeals 2/16/1999) Due to the Port Authority's failure to adequately implement the OSP's recommendations, the report will be crucial evidence in a successful civil trial against it in October 2005, charging negligence in failing to prevent the 1993 bombing. (Mumma 10/26/2005; Hartocollis 10/27/2005; Hoban 2/18/2006) As of mid-2006, the other possible methods of attacking the WTC listed in the report remain undisclosed.

1986: 'Blind Sheikh' Secretly Meets with Al Taqwa Bank Leader and Others

Ahmed Ben Bella, a former president of Algeria, reportedly holds a secret meeting at his Switzerland home attended by "major figures in some of the world's most violent groups." People attending the meeting include the Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman (known as the "Blind Sheikh"); Youssef Nada, head of the Al Taqwa Bank and a major Muslim Brotherhood figure; and Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, a leading Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim scholar. US government sources believe Ben Bella, who is allegedly linked to violent Sudanese and Libyan groups, called the meeting to discuss ways to spread Muslim fundamentalism into the West. (Buffalo News 7/6/1993) Shortly after 9/11, a document called "The Project" written in 1982 will be found in Nada's house. It outlines a secret Muslim Brotherhood plan to infiltrate and defeat Western countries (see December 1982).

(Mid-1986): Report Rates Vulnerability of Public Areas of WTC to Terrorist Attack as 'Very High'

Following the release of the Office of Special Planning's (OSP) report, which called the WTC a "most attractive terrorist target" (see November 1985), the New York Port Authority, which owns the center, seeks a second opinion on the OSP's recommendations. At a cost of approximately \$100,000, it hires the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) to review the general security of the WTC. SAIC states in its report that the attractiveness of the WTC's public areas to terrorists is "very high." Like the OSP, SAIC pays particular attention to the underground levels of the center and describes a possible attack scenario much like what occurs in the 1993 bombing. (Caram 2001, pp. 105-106; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004)

1987: Office of Special Planning Closes Down

The New York Port Authority's Office of Special Planning (OSP) is closed down. It had been established in 1984 (see Early 1984) to evaluate and address the vulnerabilities of Port Authority facilities, including the World Trade Center, to terrorist attacks. (Solnik 1/5/2000; New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004) The reasons for the closure are unknown. However, Peter Goldmark, who'd created the OSP, had resigned as executive director of the Port Authority in 1985 to take a new job. (Glanz and Lipton 2004, pp. 226-228) So the absence of his support for the office may have been a factor.

February 9, 1988: Emad Salem Arrives in US; Becomes FBI Informant

Emad Salem, a former lieutenant colonel in the Egyptian army, arrives in New York from Egypt (Thomas and Randolph 8/26/1993) He soon starts working for the FBI as an informant in the underworld of the New York Russian community—with particular attention to activities involving the Russian mafia and KGB. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 69) FBI officials are wary of Salem, however, because they suspect that he may be connected to Egyptian intelligence. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 71)

Late 1980s: Ramzi Yousef Recruited by CIA?

Al-Qaeda bomber Ramzi Yousef is said to be recruited by the CIA, though details are not known. Author Richard Labeviere reported without elaboration in a 1999 book, "A classified FBI file indicates that [Yousef] was recruited by the local branch of the CIA." (Labeviere 1999, pp. 220-221) In 1995, Newsday will report, "FBI officials also are considering a probe of whether the CIA had any relationship with Yousef, who fought with the CIA-financed mujaheddin in Afghanistan in the 1980s." (Kocieniewski 4/16/1995) But there appears to be no further reporting on whether such a probe was conducted. Yousef is believed to have masterminded a series of bombings in the early 1990s, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the planned Bojinka attack, before being captured in 1995 (see February 7, 1995). If Yousef was recruited by the CIA, it may have been in the late 1980s when the CIA recruited and trained thousands of people around the world to fight in Afghanistan (see 1986-1992). In the late 1980s, Yousef was studying engineering at a Wales college, but he'd also joined the Muslim Brotherhood while there. During a break from school in 1988, he went to one of bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan and spent several months honing his bomb-making skills. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 78)





Ramzi Yousef. [Source: Associated Press]

(April 25-May 1989): US Holds Secret Meetings with Egyptian Terror Group Headed by 'Blind Sheikh'

Members of Egyptian militant group Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, whose spiritual head is the 'Blind Sheikh,' Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, hold a series of secret meetings with US officials at the American embassy in Cairo. The meetings are initiated by Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, which wants to co-operate with the US, because it thinks the US is co-operating with and supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. At the meetings, representatives of the group tell the US:

- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya has between 150,000 and 200,000 members;
- One of the representatives at the meetings sat on Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya's shura, or leadership council, between 1981 and 1988. The 11 members of the group's shura are named at the meetings, as is its operational commander;
- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya thinks highly of Saudi Arabian King Fahd, but believes he should take a stronger line against Iran. However, Abdul-Rahman met an Iranian delegation in Pakistan in autumn 1988;
- The group will not attack US diplomats;
- Abdul-Rahman travels to the US yearly, and also travels to Britain;
- The group is not as secret and violent as represented by the Egyptian government and has undergone a "change in thinking," becoming concerned about its radical and violent image.

Embassy officials are skeptical about some of the claims, as the group's representatives reveal more than the officials think is prudent. One year after the meetings, Abdul-Rahman will be issued a US visa by a CIA officer and move to the US (see July 1990). (US Embassy in Cairo 4/25/1989 ; US Embassy in Cairo 5/3/1989 )

July 1989: FBI Monitors Future Bombers Weapons Training Sessions; Fail to Follow Up

FBI agents photograph Islamic radicals shooting weapons at the Calverton Shooting Range, on Long Island, New York. The group is secretly monitored as they shoot AK-47 assault rifles, semiautomatic handguns, and revolvers for four successive weekends. The use of weapons such as AK-47's are illegal in the US, but this shooting range is known to be unusually permissive. Ali Mohamed is apparently not at the range but has been training the five men there: El Sayyid Nosair, Mahmud Abouhalima, Mohammed Salameh, Nidal Ayyad, and Clement Rodney Hampton-El. Nosair will assassinate Rabbi Meir Kahane one year later (see November 5, 1990), and the others except for Hampton-El will be convicted of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993), while Hampton-El will be convicted for a role in the "Landmarks" bombing plot (see June 24, 1993). Some



One of the Calverton surveillance photographs introduced as evidence in court (note that some faces have been blurred)

FBI agents have been assigned to watch some Middle Eastern men who are frequenting the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn. Each weekend, Mohamed's trainees drive from Al-Kifah to the shooting range, and a small FBI surveillance team follows them. The FBI has been given a tip that some Palestinians at Al-Kifah are planning violence targeting Atlantic City casinos. By August, the casino plot fails to materialize, and the surveillance, including that at the shooting range, comes to an end. Author Peter Lance will later say that why the FBI failed to follow up the shooting sessions is a "great unanswered question." (Lance 2003, pp. 29-33; New York Times 10/5/2003)


1990: Security Chief Warns Port Authority that Terrorists Could Set Off a Truck Bomb in the WTC Parking Garage

Rick Rescorla, a security chief for a company at the World Trade Center, and Dan Hill, a former Army colleague of his, write a report in which they warn that terrorists could attack the WTC by detonating a truck filled with explosives in the underground parking garage, but the Port Authority, which manages the WTC, dismisses their warning. Rescorla, who previously served in the US Army, is now working as the director of security at brokerage firm Dean Witter, and his office is on the 44th floor of the WTC's South Tower. (Stewart 2002, pp. 173-177; Stewart 2/11/2002)

Former Army Ranger Agrees to Identify WTC Vulnerabilities - Rescorla has become increasingly concerned about the possibility of a terrorist attack in the United States, especially after Pan Am Flight 103 was blown up by a terrorist bomb over Scotland in December 1988, and he thinks the WTC is "an obvious target." He therefore asks his friend Hill to join him in New York and be his consultant. (Stewart 2002, pp. 173) Hill, a former Army Ranger, has been trained in counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, demolition, and the use of explosives. (Stewart 2002, pp. 152-153) "If anyone can figure out how to hurt this building, you can," Rescorla tells him, and adds, "I want to know the worst." Hill agrees to help Rescorla. After he arrives in New York, Rescorla takes him to the WTC. Rescorla explains the basic engineering of the Twin Towers and suggests they examine the buildings, starting at the bottom and then working up.

Parking Area Has No Visible Security - The two men begin by walking around the entire 16-acre WTC complex. Hill then asks Rescorla where the loading and docking operations are, and Rescorla takes him to a ramp that goes to the basement levels of the WTC. After they walk down the ramp, past a loading dock, and into a parking area, Hill asks, "Where are the guards?" Rescorla replies, "There are no guards." Hill then notices that all the major columns and supporting beams in the parking area are visible and exposed.

Hill Thinks Parking Area Is a 'Soft Touch' - After thinking for a few minutes, Hill says: "Hell, Rick. This is a soft touch. It's not even a challenge." He then explains to Rescorla how he would attack the WTC if he was a terrorist. According to journalist and author James B. Stewart, Hill says he would "bring in a stolen truck, painted like a delivery truck. He'd fill it with a mixture of ammonium nitrate and diesel fuel, then drive down the ramp and park. With four or five men dressed in coveralls, he could plant additional charges near key supporting pillars within 15 minutes. Then he and the men would walk out and disperse, and he'd remove his coveralls." He would then take a taxi to another location, where he would have a van waiting with a woman, two children, and possibly a dog inside. He would use a cell phone or a beeper to detonate the truck bomb and then make his getaway. "Nobody's going to stop a family and a dog on Interstate 95," Hill tells Rescorla.

Port Authority Dismisses Rescorla's Concerns - Later on, the two men analyze Hill's findings and incorporate them into a report for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which manages the WTC buildings. The following day, Rescorla meets with some Port Authority officials and notifies them of his and Hill's concerns, but they are uninterested. Rescorla later tells Hill that the officials' response was to say, "You worry about your floors and we'll worry about the rest, including the basements and parking." All the same, Rescorla sends copies of his and Hill's report to the Port Authority and also the New York City Police Department, but he receives no responses. Rescorla and Hill are unaware that the Port Authority's Office of Special Planning submitted a report in 1985 that warned of a bombing at the WTC of a similar kind to what they have envisioned, and also emphasized the vulnerability of the basement levels (see November 1985). However, no steps were taken to increase security at the WTC in response to that report. (Stewart 2002, pp. 173-177) In February 1993, terrorists will attack the WTC in almost exactly the way that Hill predicts, by parking a van containing a 1,500-pound urea nitrate bomb in the basement and detonating it with a timer (see February 26, 1993). (Parachini 2000, pp. 190-191 )

July 1990: 'Blind Sheikh' Enters US Despite Being on Terrorist Watch List, Takes Over Al-Kifah

Despite being on a US terrorist watch list for three years, radical Muslim leader Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman enters the US on a “much-disputed” tourist visa issued by an undercover CIA agent. (Friedman 3/30/1993; Weaver 5/1996; Lance 2003, pp. 42) Abdul-Rahman was heavily involved with the CIA and Pakistani ISI efforts to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan, and became famous traveling all over the world for five years recruiting new fighters for the Afghan war. The CIA gave him visas to come to the US starting in 1986 (see December 15, 1986-1989). However, he never hid his prime goals to overthrow the governments of the US and Egypt. (Weaver 5/1996) FBI agent Tommy Corrigan will later say that prior to Abdul-Rahman’s arrival, “terrorism for all intents and purposes didn’t exist in the United States. But [his] arrival in 1990 really stoke the flames of terrorism in this country. This was a major-league ballplayer in what at the time was a minor-league ballpark. He was... looked up to worldwide. A mentor to bin Laden, he was involved with the MAK over in Pakistan.” The charity front Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) is also known as Al-Kifah, and it has a branch in Brooklyn known as the Al-Kifah Refugee Center. The head of that branch, Mustafa Shalabi, picks up Abdul-Rahman at the airport when he first arrives and finds an apartment for him.



Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman.
[Source: FBI]

Abdul-Rahman soon begins preaching at Al Farouq mosque, which is in the same building as the Al-Kifah office, plus two other local mosques, Abu Bakr and Al Salaam. (Lance 2006, pp. 53) He quickly turns Al-Kifah into his “de facto headquarters.” (Weaver 5/1996) He is “infamous throughout the Arab world for his alleged role in the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.” Abdul-Rahman immediately begins setting up a militant Islamic network in the US. (Friedman 3/30/1993) He is believed to have befriended bin Laden while in Afghanistan, and bin Laden secretly pays Abdul-Rahman’s US living expenses. (Weaver 5/1996; ABC News 8/16/2002) For the next two years, Abdul-Rahman will continue to exit and reenter the US without being stopped or deported, even though he is still on the watch list (see Late October 1990-October 1992).

Late October 1990-October 1992: ‘Blind Sheikh’ Able to Repeatedly Leave and Reenter US Despite Being on Watch List

In July 1990, the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, was mysteriously able to enter the US and remain there despite being a well known public figure and being on a watch list for three years (see July 1990).

- In late October 1990, he travels to London, so he is out of the US when one of his followers assassinates the Zionist rabbi Meir Kahane on November 5, 1990 (see November 5, 1990). He returns to the US in mid-November under the name “Omar Ahmed Rahman” and again has no trouble getting back in despite still being on the watch list. (Duke 7/13/1993)
- The State Department revokes his US visa on November 17 after the FBI informs it that he is in the US. (McKinley 12/16/1990)
- In December 1990, Abdul-Rahman leaves the US again to attend an Islamic conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. He returns nine days later and again has no trouble reentering, despite not even having a US visa at this point. (Duke 7/13/1993)
- On December 16, 1990, the New York Times publishes an article titled, “Islamic Leader on US Terrorist List Is in Brooklyn,” which makes his presence in the US publicly known. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is said to be investigating why he has not been deported already. (McKinley 12/16/1990)
- Yet in April 1991, the INS approves his application for permanent residence.
- He then leaves the US again in June 1991 to go on the religious hajj to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and returns on July 31, 1991. INS officials identify him coming in, but let him in anyway. (Mitchell 4/24/1993; Duke 7/13/1993)
- In June 1992, his application for political asylum will be turned down and his permanent residence visa revoked. But INS hearings on his asylum bid are repeatedly delayed and still have not taken place when the WTC is bombed in February 1993 (see February 26, 1993). (Lance 2003, pp. 105-106)
- Abdul-Rahman then goes to Canada around October 1992 and returns to the US yet again. The US and Canada claim to have no documentation on his travel there, but numerous witnesses in Canada see him pray and lecture there. Representative Charles Schumer (D-NY) says, “Here they spent all this time trying to get him out. He goes to Canada and gives them the perfect reason to exclude him and they don’t.”
- After the WTC bombing, the US could detain him pending his deportation hearing but chooses not to, saying it would be too costly to pay for his medical bills. (Mitchell 4/24/1993)

Abdul-Rahman will be involved in the follow up “Landmarks” plot (see June 24, 1993) before finally being arrested later in 1993. It will later be alleged that he was protected by the CIA. In 1995, the New York Times will comment that the link between Abdul-Rahman and the CIA “is a tie that remains muddy.” (MacFarquhar 10/2/1995)

November 5, 1990: First Bin Laden-Related Terror Attack in US as Jewish Rabbi Is Assassinated

Egyptian-American El Sayyid Nosair assassinates controversial right-wing Zionist leader Rabbi Meir Kahane. Kahane’s organization, the Jewish Defense League, was linked to dozens of bombings and is ranked by the FBI as the most lethal domestic militant group in the US at the time. Nosair is captured after a police shoot-out. (Friedman 3/30/1993) Within hours, overwhelming evidence suggests that the assassination was a wide conspiracy but the US government will immediately declare that Nosair was a lone gunman and ignore the evidence suggesting otherwise (see November 5, 1990 and After). Nosair will later be acquitted of Kahane’s murder (though he will be convicted of lesser charges) as investigators continue to ignore most of the evidence in his case which links to a wider conspiracy (see December 7, 1991). Nosair is connected to al-Qaeda through his job at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, an al-Qaeda front (see 1986-1993). A portion of Nosair’s defense fund will be paid for by bin Laden, although this will not be discovered until some time later. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 8/16/2002; Lance 2003, pp. 34-37)



Meir Kahane. [Source: Publicity photo]

November 5, 1990 and After: US Promotes Lone Gunman Theory in Kahane Assassination, Hiding Evidence of Al-Qaeda Links



Investigators remove boxes of evidence from El Sayyid Nosair’s residence hours after the assassination. [Source: National Geographic]

US government agencies cover up evidence of a conspiracy in the wake of El Sayyid Nosair’s assassination of controversial right-wing Zionist leader Rabbi Meir Kahane (see November 5, 1990). Nosair is captured a few blocks from the murder site after a police shoot-out. An FBI informant says he saw Nosair meeting with Muslim leader Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman a few days before the attack, and evidence indicating a wider plot with additional targets is quickly found. (Friedman 3/30/1993) Later that night, police arrive at Nosair’s house and find a pair of Middle Eastern men named Mahmud Abouhalima and Mohammed Salameh there. They are taken in for questioning. Additionally, police collect a total of 47 boxes of evidence from Nosair’s house, including: (Lance 2003, pp. 34-35)

- Thousands of rounds of ammunition.
- Maps and drawings of New York City landmarks, including the World Trade Center.
- Documents in Arabic containing bomb making formulas, details of an Islamic militant cell, and mentions of the term “al-Qaeda.”
- Recorded sermons by Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman in which he encourages his followers to “destroy the edifices of capitalism” and destroy “the enemies of Allah” by “destroying their... high world buildings.”
- Tape-recorded phone conversations of Nosair reporting to Abdul-Rahman about paramilitary training, and even discussing bomb-making manuals.
- Videotaped talks that Ali Mohamed delivered at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
- Top secret manuals also from Fort Bragg. There are even classified documents belonging to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander in Chief of the Army’s Central Command. These manuals and documents had clearly come from Mohamed, who completed military service at Fort Bragg the year before and frequently stayed in Nosair’s house.
- A detailed and top secret plan for Operation Bright Star, a special operations training exercise simulating an attack on Baluchistan, a part of Pakistan between Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea. (Sullivan and Neff 10/21/2001; Sullivan and Neff 11/13/2001; Waldman 11/26/2001; Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 8/16/2002; Lance 2003, pp. 34-35)
- Also within hours, two investigators will connect Nosair with surveillance photographs of Mohamed giving

weapons training to Nosair, Abouhalima, Salameh, and others at a shooting range the year before (see July 1989). (Lance 2003, pp. 34-35) But, ignoring all of this evidence, still later that evening, Joseph Borelli, the New York police department's chief detective, will publicly declare the assassination the work of a "lone deranged gunman." He will further state, "I'm strongly convinced that he acted alone.... He didn't seem to be part of a conspiracy or any terrorist organization." The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will later conclude, "The [New York Police Department] and the District Attorney's office... reportedly wanted the appearance of speedy justice and a quick resolution to a volatile situation. By arresting Nosair, they felt they had accomplished both." (Friedman 3/30/1993; Lance 2003, pp. 34-36) Abouhalima and Salameh are released, only to be later convicted for participating in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. Investigators will later find in Nosair's possessions a formula for a bomb almost identical to one used in the WTC bombing. (Friedman 3/17/1995) As one FBI agent will later put it, "The fact is that in 1990, myself and my detectives, we had in our office in handcuffs, the people who blew up the World Trade Center in '93. We were told to release them." The 47 boxes of evidence collected at Nosair's house that evening are stored away, inaccessible to prosecutors and investigators. The documents found will not be translated until after the World Trade Center bombing. Nosair will later be acquitted of Kahane's murder (though he will be convicted of lesser charges), as investigators will continue to ignore all evidence that could suggest Nosair did not act alone (see December 7, 1991). (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 8/16/2002; Lance 2003, pp. 34-37) District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, who prosecuted the case, will later speculate the CIA may have encouraged the FBI not to pursue any other leads. Nosair worked at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center which was closely tied to covert CIA operations in Afghanistan (see Late 1980s and After). (Friedman 3/17/1995)

Mid-November 1990: CIA Allegedly Blocks FBI Investigation of 'Blind Sheikh' in Kahane Assassination

The FBI is apparently under pressure to back off from investigating Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. One week after the murder of Zionist rabbi Meir Kahane, a long-time FBI counterterrorism expert meets with one of his top undercover operatives. According to the FBI agent, the undercover operative asks, "Why aren't we going after the Sheikh [Abdul-Rahman]?" The FBI agent replies, "It's hands-off." He further explains, "It was no accident that the Sheikh got a visa and that he's still in the country. He's here under the banner of national security, the State Department, the NSA, and the CIA." The agent concludes that Abdul-Rahman is untouchable. Noting how the government is already firmly suggesting that El Sayyid Nosair was the only one involved in Kahane's murder, he says, "I haven't seen the lone-gunman theory advocated [so forcefully] since John F. Kennedy." (Friedman 3/30/1993) The FBI will also fail to look at a wealth of evidence suggesting others were involved in the assassination (see November 5, 1990 and After).

1991: Private Security Report Indicates WTC Is Terrorist Target


During the mid-1980s, a series of reports described the vulnerability of the World Trade Center to terrorist attack (see July 1985)(see November 1985)(see (Mid-1986)). Now, because of the increased risk of terrorism against the US due to the Gulf War, the New York Port Authority hires private security company Burns and Roe Securacom to prepare a further report, and tells them that the WTC is a terrorist target. Unlike previous investigators, Burns and Roe Securacom finds that the center's shopping and pedestrian areas, rather than the underground parking garage, are the most likely targets. (New York County Supreme Court 1/20/2004; Hartocollis 10/27/2005) After separating from Burns and Roe, Securacom (later called Stratesec) will become one of a number of firms involved in providing security at the WTC, right up to the day of 9/11 (see October 1996). (Burns 3/1/2003)

(February 28, 1991): Head of Al-Kifah Charity Front Murdered, Increasing Al-Qaeda's Strength in US

Around February 28, 1991, Mustafa Shalabi, head of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center's main US office in Brooklyn, is murdered. Al-Kifah is a charity front with ties to both the CIA and al-Qaeda (see 1986-1993). Shalabi's body is found in his house on March 1. He had been shot and stabbed multiple times and \$100,000 was stolen. Shalabi is found with two red hairs in his hand, and the FBI soon suspects Mahmud Abouhalima, who is red-headed, for the murder. Abouhalima identified Shalabi's body for the police, falsely claiming to be Shalabi's brother. He will later be one of the 1993 WTC bombers. Shalabi had been having a growing public dispute with the "Blind Sheikh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, over where to send the roughly one million dollars Al-Kifah was raising annually. Abdul-Rahman wanted some of the money to be used to overthrow the Egyptian government while Shalabi wanted to send all of it to Afghanistan. Shalabi had given

up the fight and had already booked a flight to leave the US when he was killed. The murder is never solved. (Lance 2003, pp. 49-52; Lance 2006, pp. 65-66) Abdul Wali Zindani takes over as head of Al-Kifah and apparently will run the office until it closes shortly after the 1993 WTC bombing. He is nephew of Sheikh Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, a radical imam in Yemen with ties to bin Laden. Abdul-Rahman, also linked to bin Laden, increases his effective control over Al-Kifah and its money. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 82) Al-Kifah's links to al-Qaeda were already strong before Shalabi's death. But author Peter Lance will later comment that after his death, "Osama bin Laden had an effective al-Qaeda cell right in the middle of Brooklyn, New York. A tough look at the Shalabi murder might have ripped the lid off al-Qaeda years before the FBI ever heard of the network." (Lance 2003, pp. 52)

December 1991-May 1992: Bin Laden-Linked Bomber Ramzi Yousef Trains Philippine Militants

Ramzi Yousef, the future bomber of the WTC in 1993, stays in the Philippines and trains militants there in bomb-making. According to Philippine intelligence documents, Yousef had developed expertise in bomb-making and worked at a training camp at Khost, Afghanistan, teaching bomb-making for militants connected to bin Laden. But bin Laden dispatches him to the Philippines, where he trains about 20 militants belonging to the Abu Sayyaf group. Abu Sayyaf is heavily penetrated by Philippine undercover operatives at this time, especially Edwin Angeles, an operative who is the second in command of the group. Angeles will later recall that Yousef is introduced to him at this time as an "emissary from bin Laden." (Abuza 9/1/2005 ) Angeles also claims Yousef decided to use the Philippines as a "launching pad" for terrorist acts around the world. (Kocieniewski 9/6/1996) One of Abu Sayyaf's top leaders will later recall that Yousef also brings a significant amount of money to help fund the group. (Dinampo 1/22/2007; CNN 1/31/2007) A flow chart of Yousef's associates prepared in early 1995 by Angeles' Philippines handler Rodolfo Mendoza shows a box connected to Abu Sayyaf labeled "20 trainees/recruits." So presumably the Philippine government is aware of this information by then, but it is not known when they warned the US about it (see Spring 1995). Yousef will also later admit to planning the 1993 WTC bombing at an Abu Sayyaf base, which most likely takes place at this time (see Early 1992). The ties between Yousef and Abu Sayyaf will grow stronger, culminating in the 1995 Bojinka plot (see January 6, 1995), an early version of the 9/11 plot.

Early 1992: Yousef Plans WTC Bombing at Militant Base in Philippines

Al-Qaeda bomber Ramzi Yousef plans the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993) at an Abu Sayyaf base in the Philippines. Yousef will admit this during his trial for the bombing after his 1995 arrest. He says he plotted there with "Afghans"—other veterans of the war in Afghanistan during the 1980s. (Labeviere 1999, pp. 220-221) It isn't known when he did this exactly, but reports place him in the Philippines with the Abu Sayyaf for much of early 1992 (see December 1991-May 1992) before his trip to the US in September 1992 (see September 1, 1992), so it most likely took place then. It will later come to light that the Abu Sayyaf militant group is deeply penetrated by the Philippine government at this time, as even the second in command of the group is an undercover operative (see 1991-Early February 1995). It is not known if the Philippine government gave the US any warning about Yousef's activities.

January 1992-Summer 1993: Texas Arrest Could Help Investigators Link WTC Bombers to Bin Laden

In January 1992, Wadih El-Hage is briefly arrested and detained by police in Arlington, Texas, for a traffic violation. Police records show the driver of the car is Marwan Salama. From late 1992 until about a month before the World Trade Center bombing in February 1993 (see February 26, 1993), more than two dozen calls were placed from phones used by the bombers to an Arlington number used by Salama. Salama is never charged with any crime and continues to live in the US at least through late 1998. (Reaves and McGonigle 10/28/1998) Several months later, El-Hage moves to Sudan to work as bin Laden's personal secretary. He registers his presence there with the US consulate. (Jacquard 2002, pp. 80) US intelligence began investigating El-Hage in 1991 for links to both a murder and an assassination in the US (see March 1991), and in the summer of 1993 one of the WTC bombers reveals his links to El-Hage (see Summer 1993). Presumably, links can be drawn between the bombers and El-Hage working for bin Laden in Sudan, but it is unknown if that link is made.

February 1992-February 7, 1995: Ramzi Yousef's Stay at Pakistani Guesthouse Links Him to Bin Laden



Apparently the bin Laden guest house where Yousef lived. [Source: National Geographic]

According to Pakistani investigators, Ramzi Yousef spends most of this time at the Beit Ashuhada guesthouse (translated as House of Martyrs) in Peshawar, Pakistan, which is funded by Osama bin Laden. Pakistani investigators reveal this bin Laden-Yousef connection to US intelligence in March 1995. The CIA will publicly reveal this in 1996. (Central Intelligence Agency 1996 ; Tenet 2007, pp. 100) While living there, Yousef receives help and financing from two unnamed senior al-Qaeda representatives. (Reeve 1999, pp. 47) Yousef will be arrested at another nearby bin Laden safe house in February 1995 (see February 7, 1995) with bin Laden's address found in his pocket. (Bone and Road 10/18/1997) During these years, Yousef takes long trips to the US in preparation of the WTC bombing (see

February 26, 1993) and the Philippines, where several plots are developed (see January 6, 1995). He also uses an al-Qaeda influenced mosque in Milan, Italy, as a logistical base (see 1995-1997).

April 24-September 1, 1992: WTC Bombers Have Numerous Links to Al-Kifah Charity Front

On April 24, 1992, Houston pizza deliveryman Ahmad Ajaj and San Antonio cabdriver Ibrahim Ahmad Suleiman fly together from Texas to Pakistan. Suleiman is a Texas contact of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, the Brooklyn-based Islamist militant organization linked to both the CIA and al-Qaeda (see 1986-1993). Suleiman had begun raising funds for the Afghan war in Texas in the late 1980s, and acquaintances said he traveled to Pakistan several times, carrying a briefcase full of cash to fund the mujaheddin fighting in Afghanistan. When they arrive in Pakistan, they stay at a hostel in Peshawar, near the Afghanistan border, known as the Abdullah Azzam House. Named after Osama bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam, this hostel is owned by Al-Kifah and also houses its Pakistan headquarters. Ajaj and Suleiman stay there off and on over the next several months. Al-Qaeda bomber Ramzi Yousef also sometimes stays there during the same months. Ajaj also allegedly receives explosives training at an Afghanistan training camp with Yousef. His letter of introduction to the camp is signed by an Azzam House official. On September 1, 1992, Ajaj and Yousef arrive together in New York City on a flight from Pakistan. Ajaj is carrying some bomb manuals; investigators will later find the fingerprints of Ajaj, Yousef, and Suleiman on them. Both men are carrying identification cards that give the PO box number in Tucson, Arizona, that matches an al-Kifah branch there. Ajaj is briefly detained at the airport, but Yousef is allowed to go. (McGonigle and Reaves 6/8/1997) He gets into a taxi and tells the taxi driver to drive him to the building that houses the al-Qaeda headquarters in Brooklyn as well as the closely associated Al Farooq mosque, led at the time by the "Blind Sheikh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. (Lance 2003) Ajaj and Yousef will later be sentenced to life in prison for their roles in the 1993 WTC bombing (see February 26, 1993). Suleiman will only be sentenced to 10 months in prison for lying to a grand jury about his travels with Ajaj. (New York Times 11/25/1998) A CIA internal report will conclude the agency is "partly culpable" for the WTC bombing, mainly due to its support for Al-Kifah (see January 24, 1994).

Early July 1992: FBI Fires Informant Who Has Penetrated WTC Bombing Group



In mid-June 1992, FBI informant Emad Salem talks to El Sayyid Nosair, who is in prison for killing Zionist leader Rabbi Meir Kahane (see November 5, 1990). Nosair and an associate of his named Ali Shinawy reveal to Salem that their group (all of whom are close to Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman) is plotting to set off bombs at twelve "Jewish locations" in New York City, including temples and banks. A few days later, Nosair's cousin Ibrahim El-Gabrowni introduces Salem to "Dr. Rashid," which is an alias for Clement Rodney Hampton-El, although Salem does not know that yet. "Dr. Rashid" says he is unable to get the remote bomb detonators the group wants, but he can get already assembled pipe bombs for about \$1,000 apiece, and guns. Salem and Shinawy agree to find a warehouse where they can build the bombs. Salem tells all of this to his FBI handlers Louis Napoli and John Anticev, but their boss, Carson Dunbar, insists that Salem has to wear a wire so they can record

Emad Salem. [Source: National Geographic]

conversations in order to get the evidence to make a convincing court case against the plotters. But Salem, who is only being paid \$500 a week to inform for the FBI, refuses to wear a wire, saying it is too dangerous. The FBI had been able to corroborate most of Salem's information through their own surveillance such as the monitoring of Nosair's calls from prison. But even though Salem is easily the FBI's best source of information on Abdul-Rahman's group, the FBI fires Salem in early July 1991. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 70-75) The FBI had a long tradition of having pure intelligence agents who did not wear wires. One FBI source will later note that the FBI could have easily gotten what they needed to make a criminal case without Salem wearing a wire. "It would just take a little more work. We'd have to take his leads and do surveillance. Follow these guys and contain the threat. This is what the FBI does." (Lance 2003, pp. 92) Author Peter Lance will later comment that without Salem, "Now, when it came to Nosair, the bombing plot, and Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, the [FBI] was essentially flying blind." The FBI will be unaware as the "Jewish locations" plot morphs into a plot to bomb the World Trade Center over the next several months. (Lance 2003, pp. 92)

September 1, 1992: US Misses Opportunity to Stop First WTC Bombing and Discover Al-Qaeda



Ahmad Ajaj.
[Source: FBI]

Al-Qaeda operatives Ahmad Ajaj and Ramzi Yousef enter the US together. Ajaj is arrested at Kennedy Airport in New York City. Yousef is not arrested and will later mastermind the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. "The US government was pretty sure Ajaj was a terrorist from the moment he stepped foot on US soil," because his "suitcases were stuffed with fake passports, fake IDs, and a cheat sheet on how to lie to US immigration inspectors," plus "two handwritten notebooks filled with bomb recipes, six bomb-making manuals, four how-to videotapes concerning weaponry, and an advanced guide to surveillance training." However, Ajaj is charged only with passport fraud and serves a six-month sentence. From prison, Ajaj frequently calls Yousef and others involved in the 1993 WTC bombing plot, but no one will translate the calls until long after the bombing. (Braun et al. 10/14/2001) Ajaj will be released from prison three days after the WTC bombing, but is later rearrested and sentenced to more than 100 years in prison. (Braun et al. 10/14/2001) One of the manuals seized from Ajaj will be horribly mistranslated for the trial. For instance, the title page is said to say "The Basic Rule," published in Jordan in 1982, when in fact the title says "al-Qaeda" (which means "the base" in English), published in Afghanistan in 1989. Investigators will subsequently complain that a proper translation could have shown an early connection between al-Qaeda and the WTC bombing. (Engelberg 1/14/2001) An Israeli newsweekly will report that the Palestinian Ajaj may have been a mole for the Israeli Mossad. The Village Voice will suggest that Ajaj may have had "advance knowledge of the World Trade Center bombing, which he shared with Mossad, and that Mossad, for whatever reason, kept the secret to itself." Ajaj is not just knowledgeable, but is involved in the planning of the bombing from his prison cell. (Friedman 8/3/1993)

October 3, 1992: FBI Learns Al-Kifah Charity Front Is Forming an Elite Armed Militia

Garrett Wilson is a burly ex-US Army Ranger and military police officer at a naval base in Philadelphia who also runs his own security business. He is also a trusted FBI informant, helping to monitor militant black Muslims who come to him for paramilitary training and to buy surplus military equipment. On October 3, 1992, Wilson gets a call from Abdul Wali Zindani, head of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn. Al-Kifah is a charity front linked to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see 1986-1993). Zindani wants Wilson to help train and supply an elite group of about 10 men. Wilson then speaks to Abu Ubaidah Yahya, security chief for Al-Kifah, and Yahya further explains that they are especially interested in hostage rescue training. Wilson contacts his FBI handlers John Liguori and Tommy Corrigan, who are intrigued. They are aware that friends of El Sayyid Nosair have been plotting to break Nosair from prison and worry the hostage rescue training could be related to that, since Nosair has been closely linked to Al-Kifah. They tell Wilson to remain in contact with the people at Al-Kifah and see what develops. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 81-83)

November 1992-February 11, 1993: Egyptian Intelligence Repeatedly Warns US about Cells Linked to 'Blind Sheikh' in New York

Beginning in November 1992, Egyptian intelligence repeatedly warns US intelligence that Sheikh Abdul-Rahman's principal mosques in the US, the Al Salaam and Al Farouq mosques in Brooklyn, are "hotbeds of

terrorist activity,” and that Abdul-Rahman is plotting a new round of terrorist attacks in Egypt. The Al-Kifah Refugee Center charity front is based inside the Al Farouq mosque (see 1986-1993). One Egyptian official later says, “There were many, many contacts between Cairo and Washington.” On November 12, 1992, members of the Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya militant group led by Abdul-Rahman machine-guns a bus-load of Western tourists in Egypt, injuring five Germans. (Friedman 3/30/1993) Between February 6 and 11, 1993, some FBI agents travel to Cairo, Egypt, to discuss Egyptian concerns with officials there. The Egyptians are said to warn about certain terrorist cells in the US connected to Abdul-Rahman but do not specifically warn about the WTC bombing. (Jehl 4/6/1993) Perhaps as a result of these concerns, on February 13, the FBI obtains a FISA warrant and begins tapping Abdul-Rahman’s phone calls. (Lance 2003, pp. 103) Shortly after the WTC bombing two weeks later (see February 26, 1993), Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will say that the bombing could have been prevented if Egypt’s warnings had been heeded. (Jehl 4/6/1993)

Mid-November-December 20, 1992: FBI Informant Learns of Plot to Train and Arm Group with Automatic Weapons and Bombs

In mid-November 1992, Garrett Wilson, an FBI informant who sells military equipment and conducts paramilitary training, is contacted by someone named “Dr. Rashid.” Wilson had previously been contacted by Abu Ubaidah Yahya, the security chief at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn, a charity front tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see 1986-1993). Wilson’s FBI handlers are excited to learn about this because in June 1992, a “Dr. Rashid” had met with FBI informant Emad Salem and offered to supply bombs and guns (see Early July 1992). The FBI runs a background check and determines “Dr. Rashid” is really Clement Rodney Hampton-El, who works at a hospital in Long Island. The also learn from phone records that he has recently made calls to the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. On December 20, 1992, Wilson meets with Yahya and Hampton-El. They tell him that they want him to train eight to ten men for an international jihad battalion separate from another small group Al-Kifah wants Wilson to help train (see October 3, 1992). Hampton-El says he will provide AK-47s for the training sessions, but is looking for detonator caps, which are needed to make bombs. He also says the group will be sent to fight in Bosnia, but they are asking to be instructed in sniper firing and frontal assaults on buildings. Wilson tells FBI agent Tommy Corrigan, “It sounds to me like they either want to kidnap or kill someone.” Corrigan and other FBI agents are alarmed. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 83-84)

Late 1992-Early 1993: Bosnian Charity Front Funds Training Camp and Militant Bombers in US

Clement Rodney Hampton-El will later admit that he had been smuggling money into the US for military training from the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA). (USA v. Benevolence International Foundation and Enaam M. Arnaout 4/29/2002, pp. 6-7 🗨️) Hampton-El is linked to Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman and the Al-Kifah Refugee Center and will later be given a long prison term for involvement in the “Landmarks” plot (see June 24, 1993). He makes several trips to Europe in 1992-1993, raising over \$150,000 to fund a Pennsylvania training camp (see Late 1992-Early 1993). After one trip to Vienna, Austria (where TWRA has its headquarters), he returns to the US with \$20,000 hidden in his pants to avoid the scrutiny of US customs officers. (United Press International 8/2/1995) At the time, TWRA is funneling huge amounts of weapons into Bosnia in violation of a UN embargo but with the tacit approval of the US (see Mid-1991-1996). Hampton-El also travels to Bosnia around this time. (Kohlmann 2004, pp. 73-74)

December 1992-Early February 1993: Islamist Militants Learn to Fight at Pennsylvania Training Camp



Mohammed Abouhalima. [Source:]

Siddig Siddig Ali, Abdo Mohammed Haggag, Abu Ubaidah Yahya, Mohammed Abouhalima, and others train at a militant training camp in New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania, with weapons and ammunition provided by Yahya and Clement Rodney Hampton-El (see February 21, 1995). Abouhalima will later be convicted for a role in the 1993 WTC bombing, as will his brother (see February 26, 1993) while the others mentioned will be convicted for roles in the related “Landmarks” plot (see June 24, 1993). (USA v. Omar Ahmad Ali Abdel-Rahman et al 7/13/1995, pp. 9) Yahya is the chief instructor, as he is an ex-US Marine who served two tours in Vietnam and teaches at a martial arts academy. Siddig Ali will later say of Yahya, “[H]e’s decorated and has a lot of medals... [and he was] a great trainer...” The training even includes mock nighttime assaults on a nearby electric power substation. (Kohlmann 2004, pp. 73) An FBI informant named

Corbis]

Garrett Wilson helps lead the FBI to the camp, and the FBI monitors it for two days, January 16 and 17, but the monitoring team is mysteriously pulled away before the end of the second day (see January 16-17, 1993). In a wiretapped conversation with an FBI informant (most likely Wilson), Siddig Ali says regarding the camp, "Our goal is that these people get extensive and very, very, very good training, so that we can get started at anyplace where jihad (holy war) is needed... And after they receive their training, they go to Bosnia... And whoever survives, I mean, could come and [instruct] somewhere else, or Egypt, or any other place, etc..." (Kohlmann 2004, pp. 73) Hampton-El makes trips to Europe to pick up money from the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) charity front to fund the camp (see Late 1992-Early 1993). TWRA is funneling huge amounts of weapons into Bosnia in violation of a UN embargo but with the tacit approval of the US (see Mid-1991-1996).

December 19, 1992: FBI, Having Fired Key Informant, Misses Opportunity to Uncover WTC Bombing Plot

Mahmud Abouhalima, one of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing plotters, calls Emad Salem. Salem had been an FBI informant on a group close to the "Blind Sheikh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, including Abouhalima, but was fired by the FBI some months ago (see Early July 1992). Salem is mad at the FBI about being fired and doesn't bother to tell it about the phone call, and doesn't call Abouhalima back. It will later be discovered that on this same day other plotters begin calling chemical companies in search of bomb parts, and the next day another FBI informant will be contacted and asked to help get bomb parts (see Mid-November-December 20, 1992). Salem has bomb-making expertise so it is likely Abouhalima calls him to get help in making the bomb to blow up the WTC. The authors of the 2002 book *The Cell* will note that had Salem still been working as an informant for the FBI at the time of this call, the WTC bombing plot "might well have been cracked before Salem had hung up the phone." (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 84-85)

January 7-13, 1993: FBI Cancels Monitored Meetings that Could Expose WTC Bomb Plot



Carson Dunbar. [Source: Brian Price/ Associated Press]

Garrett Wilson, a paramilitary trainer and gun seller working as an FBI informant, meets with Clement Rodney Hampton-El and Abu Ubaidah Yahya at a Brooklyn restaurant on January 7, 1993. Yahya is the security chief of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, a charity front tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see 1986-1993), and Hampton-El is also tied to Al-Kifah. They had already met Wilson and discussed hiring him to give weapons training to a small group (see Mid-November-December 20, 1992). They agree that, starting on January 13, Wilson will train the group for five days at a New Jersey shooting range and will get paid \$5,000 for doing so. (This is not to be confused with other training going on the same month taught by Yahya in Pennsylvania (see December 1992-Early February 1993).) The FBI plans to monitor the training and follow all of the participants. But FBI superior Carson Dunbar learns of the plan just before the training is to begin and expresses concern that the FBI could be training potential terrorists. He dramatically cuts down what Wilson is allowed to teach, so much so that his FBI handlers are worried Wilson will be immediately

exposed as a US agent and killed. Then, as Wilson is getting in his car to drive to the training site, Carson cancels the operation altogether. Luckily for Wilson, he has a good alibi for not attending, so his cover is not blown. But other FBI agents are furious at Dunbar's behavior. It is not known who would have attended, but Hampton-El and Yahya are loosely connected to many of the 1993 WTC bombers. The authors of the 2002 book *The Cell* will later comment that the FBI "was just a whisper away from the World Trade Center plot." (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 87-90)

January 15, 1993: FBI Informant Connects Plotters to 'Blind Sheikh'



Garrett Wilson, a paramilitary trainer and gun seller working as an FBI informant, had made an agreement to give weapons training to a group of radical militants, but the FBI canceled the plan at the last minute after FBI superior Carson Dunbar worried the FBI could be training future terrorists. Wilson had made the arrangement with Clement Rodney Hampton-El and Abu Ubaidah Yahya, both of whom are connected to the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, which is linked to al-Qaeda and the CIA (see 1986-1993). But while the training has been canceled, Wilson's cover as an informant has not been blown yet and his FBI handlers realize that Wilson would still have to give Hampton-El some equipment he'd bought for him. His FBI handlers Tommy

Corrigan and John Liguori proposes that Wilson meet Hampton-El so the FBI can monitor the meeting and see where the trail leads. This time, they avoid Dunbar and get permission from a different supervisor, Neil Herman. Wilson goes to meet Hampton-El at a New Jersey hotel on January 15, 1993. Hampton-El isn't there, but Yahya is, along with two others that Wilson does not know. Wilson hands off the equipment (weapons and military manuals) and quickly leaves, and then the FBI tails the others as they leave. Yahya returns in one car to the Al-Kifah office, where he is the security chief. The others go in another car to the apartment where the Blind Sheikh, Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, lives. The FBI quickly determines the other two men at the meeting are Abdo Mohammed Haggag, Abdul-Rahman's speechwriter, and Siddig Siddig Ali, Abdul-Rahman's Sudanese translator. Corrigan, Liguori, and other FBI agents are stunned by the connections to Abdul-Rahman, who is a well-known public figure. But they will only be allowed to follow up for several days before the surveillance operation is canceled. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 87-90)

January 16-17, 1993: FBI Discovers Islamic Militant Training Camp in Pennsylvania but Immediately Cuts Off Surveillance

On January 15, 1993, FBI informant Garrett Wilson had led the FBI to a meeting attended by Abu Ubaidah Yahya, Abdo Mohammed Haggag, and Siddig Siddig Ali (see January 15, 1993). Yahya is security chief for the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, a charity front tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see 1986-1993), and Haggag and Siddig Ali both work with the "Blind Sheikh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, who is also closely linked to Al-Kifah. Suspecting a violent plot, FBI agents have a plan to continuously monitor Yahya, Haggag, and Ali from when they leave the meeting, and for the next couple of days that is what they do. On January 16, Yahya leads the FBI to Jersey City, New Jersey, where he is holding exercises for a group of Sudanese and Middle Eastern men. Then the FBI follows Yahya and this group he is leading to a militant training camp on a farm in New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania. A squad of investigators watch them practicing martial arts, sniper firing, and rappelling. The agents think that they recognize one of the trainees as Mahmud Abouhalima, who they already strongly suspect was involved in the 1990 assassination of a Jewish leader (see November 5, 1990). (In fact, the trainee is his brother Mohammed - both of them are tall and red-headed.) However, on January 17, FBI supervisor Carson Dunbar calls the squad away from the training camp, preventing them from following the suspects as they return to their homes that evening. The FBI squad is upset, as they are sure following the suspects to their homes would lead to many new identifications and leads. Dunbar claims the surveillance is costing too much money and effectively shuts down further surveillance of everyone but Yahya and Clement Rodney Hampton-El, who has been working with Yahya, and only when they're in close range of the FBI New York office. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 90-91) Yahya will continue to train his group at the Pennsylvania camp through early February (see December 1992-Early February 1993), but apparently without further FBI surveillance of them.

Around February 1993: Three WTC Bombers Travel on Saudi Passports with Indicator of Islamist Extremism, Presumably Tracked by Saudi Authorities

The 9/11 Commission, relying on a CIA report, will later say that three of the men involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing travel on Saudi passports containing an indicator of possible Islamist extremism. (9/11 Commission 8/21/2004, pp. 46-47, 61 ) Author James Bamford will say that it is a "secret coded indicator, placed there by the Saudi government, warning of a possible terrorist affiliation." (Bamford 2008, pp. 58-59) It is unclear what the indicator looks like precisely and who the men are. However, Ahmad Ajaj, an associate of lead bomber Ramzi Yousef, does have a Saudi passport. Some of the 9/11 hijackers will later use Saudi passports with the same indicator (see October 28, 2000, June 1, 2001, and June 13, 2001, and November 2, 2007). (9/11 Commission 8/21/2004, pp. 46-47, 61 )

February 26, 1993: WTC Is Bombed but Does Not Collapse, as Bombers Had Hoped

An attempt to topple the World Trade Center fails, but six people are killed and over 1000 are injured in the misfired blast. An FBI explosives expert later states that, "If they had found the exact architectural Achilles' heel or if the bomb had been a little bit bigger, not much more, 500 pounds more, I think it would have brought her down." Ramzi Yousef, who has close ties to bin Laden, organizes the attempt. (Friedman 3/30/1993; US Congress 2/24/1998) The New York Times later reports on Emad Salem, an undercover agent who will be the key government witness in the trial against Yousef. Salem testifies that the FBI knew about the attack beforehand and told him they would thwart it by substituting a harmless powder for the



Bomb damage in underground levels of the WTC in 1993.
[Source: Najlah Feanny/ Corbis]

explosives. However, an FBI supervisor called off this plan, and the bombing was not stopped. (Blumenthal 10/28/1993) Other suspects were ineptly investigated before the bombing as early as 1990. Several of the bombers were trained by the CIA to fight in the Afghan war, and the CIA later concludes, in internal documents, that it was “partly culpable” for this bombing (see January 24, 1994). (Marshall 11/1/1998) 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is an uncle of Yousef and also has a role in the WTC bombing (see March 20, 1993). (Gumbel 6/6/2002; McDermott 9/1/2002) One of the attackers even leaves a message which will later be found by investigators, stating, “Next time, it will be very precise.” (Neumeister 9/30/2001)

Shortly After February 26, 1993: Security Chief Predicts Terrorists Crashing a Plane into the WTC



Rick Rescorla.
[Source: Public domain]

Rick Rescorla, a security chief for a company at the World Trade Center, and his friend Dan Hill conduct an analysis of the security measures at the WTC and conclude that terrorists will likely attack the Twin Towers again, probably by crashing a plane into them. Rescorla, who has served in the US Army and worked for British military intelligence, is now the director of security at brokerage firm Dean Witter. His office is on the 44th floor of the WTC’s South Tower. (Grunwald 10/28/2001; Stewart 2002, pp. 193-194; Stewart 2/11/2002) After the WTC is bombed in February 1993 (see February 26, 1993), Rescorla calls Hill to New York to be his security consultant and assess the situation. (Stewart 2002, pp. 191; Steve Humphries 9/11/2005) Hill is a former Army Ranger and has had training in counterterrorism. (Stewart 2/11/2002; Thompson 8/14/2011)

Anti-American Hostility Found at Mosques - Hill and Rescorla suspect that the WTC bombing was committed by Muslims. Rescorla suggests that Hill, who is himself a Muslim and speaks Arabic, try to gather some intelligence. Hill therefore lets his beard grow and visits several mosques in New Jersey. He gets into conversations with people at the mosques, expressing pro-Islamic opinions and taking an anti-American line. According to journalist and author James B. Stewart: “[A]t every other location, Hill was struck by the intense anti-American hostility he encountered. Though these were not his own views, he barely had to mention that he thought American policy toward Israel and the Middle East was misguided, or that Jews wielded too much political power, to unleash a torrent of anti-American, anti-Semitic rhetoric. Many applauded the bombing of the World Trade Center, lamenting that it hadn’t done more damage.” Referring to his experiences at the mosques, Hill tells Rescorla, “We’ve got a problem.” He also believes that, as the symbolic “tower of the Jews,” the WTC is likely to remain a target for terrorists. (Stewart 2002, pp. 192-193; Stewart 2/11/2002)

Rescorla Thinks Terrorists Will Use a Different Method of Attack - Rescorla thinks that since terrorists failed to bring the Twin Towers down with a truck bomb, they may in future try a different method of attack, such as using a small, portable nuclear weapon or flying a plane into the building. He phones his friend Fred McBee and asks him to examine the possibility of an air attack on the WTC. By using a flight simulator on his computer, McBee concludes that such an attack seems “very viable” (see Shortly After February 26, 1993). (Stewart 2002, pp. 193; Steve Humphries 9/11/2005)

Report Warns of Another Attack on the WTC - Hill and Rescorla write a report incorporating their findings and analysis. The report warns that the WTC will likely remain a target for anti-American militants. It notes that Muslim terrorists are showing increasing tactical and technological awareness, and that the numerous young Muslims living in the United States constitute a potential “enemy within.” Rescorla states that terrorists will not rest until they have succeeded in bringing down the Twin Towers.

Hill and Rescorla Suggest Terrorists Flying a Plane into the WTC - Rescorla and Hill also lay out what they think the next terrorist attack could look like. According to Stewart, it would involve “an air attack on the Twin Towers, probably a cargo plane traveling from the Middle East or Europe to Kennedy or Newark Airport, loaded with explosives, chemical or biological weapons, or even a small nuclear weapon. Besides New York, other cities might be targeted, such as Washington or Philadelphia. Perhaps terrorists would attack all three.” Rescorla and Hill’s report concludes that Rescorla’s company, Dean Witter, should leave the WTC and move to somewhere safer in New Jersey. However, Dean Witter’s lease does not expire until 2006, and so the company will remain at the WTC. But Rescorla will start conducting regular evacuation

drills for all its employees in the South Tower. (Stewart 2002, pp. 193-194; Stewart 2/11/2002) Rescorla will be in his office at the WTC on 9/11. He will personally escort his company's employees out of the South Tower, but die himself when the tower collapses. (Grunwald 10/28/2001; BBC 2/10/2003)

Shortly After February 26, 1993: Friend of WTC Security Chief Determines that Crashing a Plane into the Twin Towers Would Be a 'Piece of Cake'



Fred McBea.
[Source: History Channel]

Fred McBea, a friend of a security chief for a company at the World Trade Center, determines, using a flight simulator on his computer, that it would be possible for terrorists to crash a jumbo jet into the Twin Towers. (Stewart 2002, pp. 193; Steve Humphries 9/11/2005) Rick Rescorla is the director of security at brokerage firm Dean Witter and his office is on the 44th floor of the WTC's South Tower. In response to the recent bombing at the WTC (see February 26, 1993), he is conducting an analysis of the security measures there. (Grunwald 10/28/2001; Stewart 2/11/2002) Rescorla thinks that terrorists might try attacking the WTC again by crashing a plane into the towers. He therefore phones McBea, who is in Oklahoma, and asks him to examine the possibility of an air attack. McBea has the Microsoft Flight Simulator program on his computer. He has been experimenting on the program with a small Cessna plane, but, while he is on the phone with Rescorla, he changes this to a Boeing 737. He then pulls up the image of Lower Manhattan and is able to simulate a crash into the WTC. "It was a piece of cake," McBea will later comment. "There's nothing to stop you... once you're in the air." He tries to simulate crashing into the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building, and is again successful. But when he tries the same experiment with Washington, DC, as the location, he finds that the White House and the Capitol building are blacked out. McBea concludes that a terrorist attack involving crashing a plane into a building "looks very viable." Presumably taking McBea's findings into account, Rescorla co-writes a report in which he states that the WTC is likely to remain a target for terrorists, and suggests that the next attack could involve terrorists crashing a cargo plane into the Twin Towers (see Shortly After February 26, 1993). (Stewart 2002, pp. 193-194; Steve Humphries 9/11/2005)

After February 26, 1993: Threat Assessments Predict Possibility of Terrorists Crashing Plane into WTC



Brian Michael Jenkins.
[Source: Rand Corporation]

Following the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993), the New York Port Authority asks investigative and security consulting firm Kroll Associates to help design new security measures for the WTC. Kroll's Deputy Chairman Brian Michael Jenkins leads the analysis of future terrorist threats and how they might be addressed. Assessments conclude that a second terrorist attack against the WTC is probable. Although it is considered unlikely, the possibility of terrorists deliberately flying a plane into the WTC towers is included in the range of possible threats. (Jenkins and Edwards-Winslow 9/2003, pp. 11; Finnegan 10/19/2009)

Spring 1993: World Trade Center Bombing Investigation Uncovers Links to Ali Mohamed



One of the documents stolen by Ali Mohamed found in El-Sayyid Nosair's residence. At the

Not long after the World Trade Center bombing in February 1993 (see February 26, 1993), investigators discover a connection between some of the plotters, Ali Mohamed, and El-Sayyid Nosair (see November 5, 1990). The Wall Street Journal reports that investigators "went back to look at [Nosair's] personal possessions. There, they finally saw the link to Mr. Mohamed." Top secret US military documents obviously supplied by Mohamed are found among Nosair's possessions. Still no action is taken against Mohamed. (Waldman 11/26/2001; Posner 2003, pp. 186-94)

bottom
are the
words:
'United
States
Army.
John F.
Kennedy
Special
Warfare
Center.'
[Source:
National
Geographic]

Spring 1993: US Intelligence Connects Ramzi Yousef and Bin Laden

US intelligence learns of ties between Ramzi Yousef and bin Laden. FBI official Neil Herman, head of the WTC bombing investigation, will later say, "The first connection with bin Laden came in connection with some phone records overseas, connecting either Yousef or possibly one of his family members." But Herman adds that bin Laden was just "one of thousands of leads that we were trying to run out." Bin Laden will later praise Yousef but say, "Unfortunately, I did not know him before the incident." (Reeve 1999, pp. 47-48)

After February 26, 1993: CIA Obstructs FBI Investigation of 'Blind Sheikh' in 1993 WTC Bombing

After the 1993 WTC bombing (see February 26, 1993), New York District Attorney Robert Morgenthau's investigators search El Sayyid Nosair's belongings (see November 5, 1990 and After) and find a bomb formula which was quite similar to the bomb used to attack the WTC. This discovery would link Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman's group to the bombing. The belongings also include a taped plea from Abdul-Rahman to destroy "the towers that constitute the pillars" of the civilization of "enemies of God." Some suspect this is a reference to the WTC. But the FBI refuses to acknowledge and follow up on the bomb formula or other leads from Nosair. Morgenthau later concludes that the CIA may have pressured the FBI to back off from evidence which led to Abdul-Rahman, as well as blocking other investigative leads (see Late 1980s and After). (Goodman 11/21/1994; Friedman 3/17/1995)

March 1993: Muslim Brotherhood Said to Help Fund World Trade Center Bombing



Nidal Ayyad. [Source: FBI]

An Egyptian official will later detail an alleged confession of Mahmud Abouhalima made at this time. Abouhalima was captured in Egypt in March 1993 and reportedly tortured into a confession there before being handed over to US officials. He will later be convicted for a role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993). Abouhalima supposedly confessed that the bomb plot originated in Afghanistan among Arab veterans of the Afghan war. He also tells his interrogators that it was approved by men describing themselves as Iranian intelligence agents and by the "Blind Shiekh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. Abouhalima further confessed that he was a member of the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group), a militant group headed by Abdul-Rahman, and that the group obtained its money from various sources including the German offices of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is unclear how much this account can be trusted, especially since the Egyptian

government has conflicts with Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood at the time. (Hedges 7/16/1993) However, two March 1993 Los Angeles Times and New York Times reports appears to confirm at least part of Abouhalima's confession. The Times articles reports that two of the bomb plotters, Mohammed Salameh and Nidal Ayyad, had bank accounts in the US where they received a total of \$10,000 sent from Germany prior to the bombing. (Fritz and Jackson 3/12/1993; Blumenthal 3/12/1993) And in 1999, journalist Simon Reeve will report, "FBI and CIA investigations traced some of the money given to the WTC conspirators back to Germany and the Muslim Brotherhood." (Reeve 1999, pp. 245) However, nothing more about this possible Muslim Brotherhood connection has been reported since.

March 1993-1996: FBI Uninterested in Warnings of California Terrorist Cell



Saraah Olson. [Source: ABC News]

In 1992 and early 1993, the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, visits a mosque in Anaheim, California, and is hosted by an al-Qaeda sleeper cell there. Cell leaders Hisham Diab and Khalil Deek live next door to each other and are avid followers of Abdul-Rahman. Apparently he stays with Deek on one trip and with Diab on another. Saraah Olson, Diab’s wife, sees Abdul-Rahman on television in connection with the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993) and fears that her husband is a terrorist. She will later claim, “I called the FBI. I said I have information about the blind sheikh. He’s been to my house, and I need to speak to someone.” But she will say they responded, “We don’t know who you’re talking about. Thank you for the information. And they hung up.” (ABC News 12/23/2004; Ross and Scott 12/23/2004) From 1990 until 1996, when she divorces Diab, she claims that “some of Osama bin Laden’s top deputies would stay with her and her husband.” She claims she repeatedly tried to warn the FBI about this but was never taken seriously. She also claims that even after Abdul-Rahman was

arrested in mid-1993, he would regularly call Diab from prison each Sunday and deliver fiery sermons that were recorded and distributed to some of his other followers. US intelligence had been investigating Deek since at least the late 1980s but never took any action against him (see Late 1980s). (Ross and Scott 12/23/2004; Krikorian and Reza 10/8/2006) Apparently also in the early 1990s, the FBI is apparently aware that Deek is running militant training camps in California for followers of Abdul-Rahman, but they take no action against him or the camps (see Early 1990s). Diab eventually becomes a US citizen and then will leave the US in June 2001. He is now believed to be hiding in Pakistan with top al-Qaeda leaders. The FBI has been asked about Olson’s allegations but has neither confirmed nor denied them. (Ross and Scott 12/23/2004)

March 2, 1993: WTC Bombers Take Credit for Attack, Threaten Future Suicide Attacks

Four days after the 1993 WTC bombing (see February 26, 1993), a letter is received by the New York Times that takes credit for the bombings. The letter is written on behalf of Ramzi Yousef’s “Fifth Battalion Liberation Army” and is signed by an Arabic-sounding alias. “If our demands are not met, all of our functional groups in the army will continue to execute our missions against military and civilian targets in and out of the United States. For your information, our army has more than [a] hundred and fifty suicidal soldiers ready to go ahead.” It also promises attacks on “nuclear targets.” It lists a series of demands, including an end to diplomatic relations with Israel and an end to interfering “with any of the Middle East countries interior affairs.” On March 10, 1993, WTC bomber Nidal Ayyad will be arrested and a copy of the letter will be found on his computer along with a second letter listing further threats (see Shortly After March 10, 1993). (Mitchell 3/28/1993; Reeve 1999, pp. 61) US officials downplay the threats in the letter. One top investigator says: “There’s no reason to believe that threat is real. We can try to prepare for everything, but we can’t lock up the city.” (Tabor 3/29/1993)

March 4-5, 1993: Suspect Allowed to Leave US Despite Evidence Tying Him to WTC Bombing



Abdul Rahman Yasin. [Source: CBS News]

A week after the WTC bombing, an Iraqi-American is questioned by the FBI and then allowed to leave the country, despite evidence tying him to the bombing. Abdul Rahman Yasin is a US citizen but spent most of his life in Iraq until 1992, when he returned to the US. Two of the major WTC bomb plotters, Ramzi Yousef and Mohammed Salameh, lived in the apartment directly above Yasin’s. Several days after Salameh is arrested, the FBI searches Yasin’s apartment. They find traces of bomb explosives on a scale, a tool box, and a shirt. In the trash, they find jeans with an acid hole burned in them, and torn pieces of a map showing the route to Yousef’s other apartment. Yasin is taken to an FBI office and interrogated by Neil Herman, head of the FBI’s WTC bombing investigation, and others. Yasin gives information about Salameh, Yousef, and other participants in the bomb plot. Agents observe a chemical burn on his right thigh, making them suspect that

he was involved in mixing the chemicals used in the bombing. The next day, he drives FBI agents to the

apartment where the bomb was made. Yet Yasin will later be interviewed and claims that the FBI never asked him if he was involved in the bomb plot. Later that evening, he flies to Iraq. Herman will later say, "There was not enough information to hold him and detain him. And the decision was made, and he was allowed to leave." (Meyer and Lichtblau 10/12/2001) In 2002, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz will recall, "I have to tell you that we fear[ed] that sending Yasin back to Iraq... was a sting operation [for the US to] tell people later on, look, this man who participated in that event now is in Iraq, etc., and use it as they are doing now, using many false pretexts, you see, to hurt Iraq in their own way." (60 Minutes 6/2/2002) Yasin will be indicted in August 1993 for his role in the WTC bombing and the US later puts a \$2 million bounty on his head. In October 2001, that will be increased to \$25 million. In 2002, Yasin will be interviewed by CBS News in Iraq and will confess to involvement in the WTC bombing but says he was not an Iraqi government agent. Iraqi authorities will tell CBS that Yasin is still imprisoned without charge and has been in prison since 1994, but this has not been independently confirmed. Some continue to point to Yasin as evidence that Iraq was behind the WTC bombing. (Meyer and Lichtblau 10/12/2001; 60 Minutes 6/2/2002)

Shortly After March 10, 1993: WTC Bombers Threaten to Attack WTC Again

On March 10, Nidal Ayyad is arrested for a role in the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993). Investigators soon discover a letter threatening future attacks in a computer file that was deleted but recovered. It makes reference to an earlier letter sent by Ayyad to the New York Times taking credit for the bombing (see March 2, 1993), and says: "We are the Liberation Army Fifth Battalion again. Unfortunately, our calculations were not very accurate this time. However, we promise you that next time it will be very precise and WTC will continue to be one our targets in the US unless our demands are met." The letter is signed by the same long Arabic alias used in Ayyad's previous letter. (Bernstein 12/15/1993)

March 20, 1993: FBI Connects KSM to WTC Bombing



Mohammed Salameh.
[Source: Sygma / Corbis]

An internal FBI report finds that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM) played a role in the bombing of the World Trade Center. According to the report, KSM wired \$660 from Qatar to a bank account of Mohammed Salameh, one of the key bombers, on November 3, 1992. This is apparently the first time KSM has come to the attention of US law enforcement. Transaction records show the money was sent from "Khaled Shaykh" in Doha, Qatar, which is where KSM is living openly and without an alias at the time (see 1992-1995). (US Congress 7/24/2003) KSM also frequently talked to his nephew Ramzi Yousef on the phone about the bombing and sent him a passport to escape the country, but apparently these details are not discovered until much later. (9/11 Commission 7/24/2004, pp. 147, 488)

(March 22-29, 1993): Hearings Held to Discuss WTC Bombing and Continuing Terrorist Threat



Roy Goodman.
[Source: Frances Roberts / New York Times]

Three days of public hearings are held to examine the security and safety aspects of the recent World Trade Center bombing. New York State Senator Roy Goodman (R-Manhattan) presides over the hearings. His committee questions 26 witnesses in what journalists Wayne Barrett and Dan Collins will later call "a no-holds-barred probe of the City [of New York] and of the Port Authority." (Rayman 11/12/2001; Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 86)

Bombing Was a 'Dire Warning' - During the hearings, Goodman calls the WTC "an extremely inviting target" for terrorists, and says the recent bombing (see February 26, 1993) was a "tragic wake-up call" and "a dire warning of the future disasters which could occur with far greater loss of life if we fail to prepare" for terrorism "here at home." (Odato 10/2/2001; Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 86-87) He also refers to a number of Port Authority consultant and internal security reports, which predicted the kind of bombing that occurred at the WTC (see January 17, 1984, July 1985, November 1985, and (Mid-1986)), and criticizes Port Authority officials who appear for failing to follow the recommendations of these reports.

Detective Says He Fears a 'Further Disaster' - One Port Authority employee who appears, Detective Sergeant Peter Caram, warns about the continuing threat to the WTC. Caram is the only Port Authority employee with a top security clearance and who is assigned to the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force. He says he fears a “further disaster somewhere down the line” and, referring to the WTC, implores the Port Authority to “harden our target.” James Fox, the assistant director in charge of the FBI’s New York office, similarly warns, “We would be well advised to prepare for the worst and hope for [the] best.” And New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly says New York should remain at “a heightened state of awareness and readiness for the foreseeable future.” (Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 87)

Official Recommends Practicing for a Plane Hitting the WTC - On the final day of the hearings, Guy Tozzoli, the director of the Port Authority’s World Trade Department, recalls a drill held in 1982, which simulated a plane crashing into the WTC (see November 7, 1982), and recommends that New York’s emergency response agencies train again for an aircraft hitting the Twin Towers (see (March 29, 1993)). (Rayman 11/12/2001)

Report Based on Hearings Is 'Largely Ignored' - The exact dates of the hearings are unclear. The hearings begin on March 22, according to Barrett and Collins. (Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 86) And according to Newsday, March 29 is the third and final day of the hearings. (Rayman 11/12/2001) Goodman will issue a 34-page report in August this year based on the hearings. The report, titled “The World Trade Center Bombing: A Tragic Wake-Up Call,” will describe the WTC as “a singular potential terrorist target.” It will call for a special task force and for increased security in the parking facilities under public skyscrapers. But Goodman will say, shortly after 9/11, that his report’s recommendations “were largely ignored as time dulled the sensitivity of the public to terrorist threats.” (Odato 10/2/2001; Rayman 11/12/2001; Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 88)

(March 29, 1993): Former Port Authority Director Recommends that New York Agencies Prepare for a Plane Hitting the WTC



Guy Tozzoli.
[Source: Business Wire]

Guy Tozzoli, a former director of the Port Authority’s World Trade Department, recommends during a legislative hearing that emergency response agencies and the New York Port Authority train for the possibility of an aircraft crashing into the World Trade Center, but his recommendation will be ignored. (Rayman 11/12/2001; MacArthur 6/4/2002; Dwyer and Flynn 2005, pp. 59) Tozzoli, who is known as “Mr. World Trade Center” due to his close association with the WTC complex, makes his recommendation on the third and final day of public hearings, presided over by New York State Senator Roy Goodman (R-Manhattan), into the security and safety aspects of the recent WTC bombing (see (March 22-29, 1993)). He is the last person, out of 26 witnesses, to be questioned. (Rayman 11/12/2001; Barrett and Collins 2006, pp. 86) Tozzoli’s testimony is “the only time that an airplane scenario came up in any detail” during the hearings, according to Newsday. Tozzoli’s recommendation, however, will be ignored. Alan Reiss, the director of the World Trade Department at the time of the 9/11 attacks, will say in November 2001 that “no exercise based on an airplane scenario was done over the past eight years.”

Computer Simulation Examined Effect of a Plane Hitting the WTC - During his testimony, Tozzoli also describes a computer simulation that was performed when the Twin Towers were being constructed—apparently referring to a simulation conducted in 1964 (see February 27, 1993 and Between September 3, 2001 and September 7, 2001)—to determine the effect of a Boeing 707 crashing into one of the buildings. “The computer said [the 707] would blow out the structural steel supports along one side of the building completely to seven floors, and naturally there would be a large loss of life on those seven floors because of the explosion,” Tozzoli says. “However,” he continues, “the structure of the building would permit the 50 floors or whatever it is above to remain and not topple, because the loads would distribute themselves around the other three walls and then eventually be assimilated in the floors below.” Furthermore, Tozzoli describes a training exercise the Port Authority held in 1982, which simulated a plane crashing into the Twin Towers (see November 7, 1982).

Report Based on Hearings Ignores Tozzoli's Recommendation - No newspapers mention Tozzoli’s testimony, and the report based on the hearings will not include Tozzoli’s recommendation that the Port Authority train for an aircraft hitting the WTC. Charles Jennings, a professor of fire protection at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, will comment, shortly after 9/11, that Tozzoli’s recommendation appears to contradict official claims that no one could have prepared for what happened on September 11. “The fact that this was explicitly suggested by Port Authority personnel in a public hearing certainly suggests that there was or should have been awareness of this threat and consideration of planning for it among the effected agencies,” he will say. (Rayman 11/12/2001; Dwyer and Flynn 2005, pp. 58-59)

Early April 1993: FBI Links Bombers in US to Bosnian Charity Front; But Bosnian Link Is Not Explored



Clement Rodney Hampton-El.
[Source: Jolie Stahl]

FBI investigators begin monitoring Clement Rodney Hampton-El's house in New York as they close in on the militants involved in the "Landmarks" plot (see June 24, 1993). They listen in on a call from Hampton-El's right-hand man, Abu Ubaidah Yahya, as he is in Vienna, Austria, picking up money from the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) for the militants in the US tied to the Landmarks plot. Over the next few months, Yahya is tracked as he makes several trips from the US to Vienna, picking up about \$100,000. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 113) Hampton-El had also been in Vienna earlier in the year, picking up more money from TWRA for the plotters (see Late 1992-Early 1993). TWRA is funneling a huge amount of weapons to Muslim Bosnia in violation of a UN embargo but with the tacit approval of the US government (see Mid-1991-1996). It also has ties to radical militants like bin Laden and Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. The Washington Post will later report that, "Intelligence agencies say they have tapes of telephone calls by Abdul-Rahman to [TWRA's] office." The "Landmarks" bombers are closely associated with Abdul-Rahman and will be convicted along with him. (Pomfret 9/22/1996) A secret 1996 CIA report will state that "according to a foreign government service" Elfatih Hassanein, the head of TWRA, "supports US Muslim extremists in Bosnia." (Central Intelligence Agency 1/1996) But apparently the US does not go after TWRA for its ties to the "Landmarks" plotters and the connection will not be publicized for years.

April 23, 1993: FBI Discovers Follow-up Plot to WTC Bombing; Sudanese Diplomats Are Reportedly Involved

In the wake of the 1993 WTC bombing (see February 26, 1993), Emad Salem is rehired as an FBI informant. Because Salem has the confidence of the group around the "Blind Sheikh" Omar Abdul-Rahman connected to the bombing, the FBI is so desperate to hire him back that they pay him over \$1 million to return. It takes time for Salem to fully regain confidences, but on April 23, 1993, Siddig Siddig Ali approaches Salem and asks him to participate in a series of bombings that he is planning. Siddig Ali explains that he wants to simultaneously bomb four landmarks in New York City: the Lincoln and Holland tunnel, the United Nations headquarters, and the New York FBI office. This will later be known as the "Landmarks" plot. Siddig Ali later tells Salem that he has friends in the Sudanese Embassy who had approved the plan and are willing to help with diplomatic license plates and credentials. Wearing a wire, over the next weeks Salem meets and records others participating in the plot. Many of them, including Siddig Ali, attended a training camp the FBI briefly monitored back in January 1993 (see January 16-17, 1993). (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 113-114) The FBI will expand its surveillance of the plotters and roll up the plot a couple of months later (see June 24, 1993). The US will later eject two Sudanese diplomats, Siraj Yousif and Ahmed Yousif Mohamed, for suspicions of involvement in the plot. Both are said to be intelligence agents posing as diplomats. Later in 1993, the US also places Sudan on a list of terrorist countries. (Prial 8/18/1993; Wren 4/11/1996)

Summer 1993: WTC Bomber Gives Up Names of Future Embassy Bombers, US Turns Down Deal for More Information



Mahmud Abouhalima.
[Source: Agence France-Presse]

Mahmud Abouhalima is arrested for his role in the February 1993 WTC bombing. He meets with US investigators without his lawyer and provides a detailed account of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, bin Laden's main support base in the US in the early 1990s. He says that twice he turned to a Texas acquaintance named Wadih El-Hage to buy weapons for his associates. El-Hage, who turns out to be bin Laden's personal secretary (see September 15, 1998), will later be caught and convicted of bombing the US embassies in Africa in 1998 (see 10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998). Abouhalima further recounts fighting in Afghanistan with the mujaheddin in the 1980s and tells of travelling to training camps with a Palestinian man named Mohammed Odeh. A Palestinian man with the name Mohammed Saddiq Odeh will later be convicted of a role in the 1998 embassy bombings as well. Abouhalima offers additional inside information about the bomb plot and his associates in exchange for a lighter sentence. But, as the New York Times will later note, prosecutors turn down the offer "for reasons that remain

unclear.” Abouhalima is later found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. (Weiser, Sachs, and Kocieniewski 10/22/1998)

Late 1993-1994: US Investigators Discover Links Between WTC Bombing and Mujaheddin Fighting in Bosnian War



Anwar Shaaban. [Source: Evan Kohlmann]

The Islamic Cultural Institute mosque in Milan, Italy is dominated by Al-Gama'a al-Islamiya, the Egyptian militant group led by Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. The imam of the mosque, Anwar Shaaban, is a leader of that group and also a leader of the mujaheddin efforts in Bosnia. The Islamic Cultural Institute serves as a transit and logistical base for mujaheddin coming or going to Bosnia (see Late 1993-December 14, 1995). After the 1993 WTC bombing, US investigators will discover heavy phone traffic between the Milan mosque and the Jersey City mosque run by Abdul-Rahman. Furthermore, they learn that bomber mastermind Ramzi Yousef used the Milan mosque as a logistical base as well. (Hundley 10/22/2001) Yousef also prayed at the Milan mosque prior to the WTC bombing. (Gunaratna 2003, pp. 171) Shaaban is a close friend of Talaat Fouad Qassem, another leader of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiya and one of the highest ranking leaders of the mujaheddin fighting in Bosnia. Qassem is directing the flow of volunteers to Bosnia while living in political asylum in Denmark (see 1990). (Kohlmann 2004, pp. 25) In April 1994, seven Arab men living in Denmark, including Qassem, are arrested. US prosecutors will later claim that fingerprints on documents and videotapes seized from the men match fingerprints on bomb manuals that Ahmad Ajaj was carrying when he entered the US with Yousef (see September 1, 1992). A raid on one apartment in Denmark uncovers bomb formulas, bomb making chemical, sketches of attack targets, some videotapes of Abdul-Rahman's sermons, and a pamphlet claiming responsibility for the WTC bombing and promising more attacks. Also, phone records and documents found in Abdul-Rahman's Jersey City apartment show the men in Denmark were communicating regularly with Abdul-Rahman. (McKinley 4/15/1995) But no one in either Milan or Denmark will be charged with a role in the WTC bombing. Danish police will later say that none of the seized documents indicated that the Arab men personally took part in the bombing. The men all are released and ironically, two of them are granted political asylum in Denmark because they are members of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiya, which the Danish consider to be a persecuted group. (Associated Press 6/28/1995) In 1995, an Italian magistrate will issue arrest warrants for Shaaban and 60 other extremists (see Late 1993-December 14, 1995), but Shaaban will flee to Bosnia, where he will die of bullet wounds in unexplained circumstances (see December 14, 1995). (Hundley 10/22/2001) The US government will later call the Islamic Cultural Institute al-Qaeda's main logistical base in Europe and some evidence will link figures connected to it to the 9/11 plot (see Late 1998-September 11, 2001).

January 24, 1994: CIA Concludes It Is 'Partly Culpable' for WTC Bombing

The Boston Herald reports that an internal CIA report has concluded that the agency is "partially culpable" for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993) because it helped train and support some of the bombers. One source with knowledge of the report says, "It was determined that a significant amount of blowback appeared to have occurred." A US intelligence source claims the CIA gave at least \$1 billion to forces in Afghanistan connected to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. More than a half-dozen of the WTC bombers belonged to this faction, and some of the CIA money paid for their training. The source says, "By giving these people the funding that we did, a situation was created in which it could be safely argued that we bombed the World Trade Center." Those connected to the bombing who went to Afghanistan include Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, Clement Rodney Hampton-el, Siddig Siddig Ali, Ahmed Ajaj, and Mahmud Abouhalima. (Miner 1/24/1994) Additionally, Ramzi Yousef trained in Afghanistan near the end of the Afghan war, and there are claims he was recruited by the CIA (see Late 1980s). "Intelligence sources say the CIA used the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn—founded to support the Afghani rebels fighting Soviet occupation—to funnel aid to Hekmatyar, setting the stage for terrorists here to acquire the money, guns and training needed to later attack the Trade Center. CIA support also made it easier for alleged terrorist leaders to enter the country." (Miner 1/24/1994) It will later be alleged that the CIA repeatedly blocked investigations relating to Al-Kifah, which was al-Qaeda's operational base in the US (see Late 1980s and After).

Shortly After March 1994: US Learns Bin Laden Gave Prominent Muslim Activist Money for 'Blind Sheikh'



Alamoudi, center, with Vice President Gore, left, and President Clinton, right. This picture is from a 1997 American Muslim Council newsletter and was presumably taken around that time. [Source: CAIR]

Abdo Mohammed Haggag, speechwriter for the "Blind Sheikh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, makes a deal and agrees to testify against Abdul-Rahman in an upcoming US trial. (McFadden 6/26/1994) He soon reveals that bin Laden has been paying for Abdul-Rahman's living expenses since Abdul-Rahman moved to the US in 1990 (see July 1990). This is one of the first things that causes US intelligence to become interested in bin Laden. (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 147-148) Further, Haggag reveals that the money was funneled through Abdurahman Alamoudi and his organization, the American Muslim Council. "Investigators tried to prove Alamoudi was a terror middleman but could not find 'smoking gun' evidence. That allowed Alamoudi to

became a politically connected Muslim activist and co-founder of the American Muslim Armed Forces and Veteran Affairs Council, which helps the US military select Muslim chaplains." (Weiss 10/1/2003) This same year, Alamoudi will be one of the founders of Ptech, a US computer company with suspected terrorism ties (see 1994). It will later be alleged that he was able to operate with impunity for years due to his close ties to Grover Norquist, a powerful Republican lobbyist (see March 20, 2002). In 2004, the US will sentence him to 23 years in prison for illegal dealings with Libya (see October 15, 2004).

February 7, 1995: Ramzi Yousef Is Arrested in Pakistan

Ramzi Yousef is arrested in Pakistan, in a safe house owned by Osama bin Laden (see February 1992-February 7, 1995). At the time, Yousef's uncle Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is staying in the same building and brazenly gives an interview to Time magazine as "Khalid Sheikh," describing Yousef's capture. (Lance 2003, pp. 328) Yousef had recruited Istaique Parker to implement a limited version of Operation Bojinka, but Parker got cold feet and instead turned in Yousef (see February 3-7, 1995). (Lance 2003, pp. 284-85) Robert I. Friedman, writing for New York magazine, will later report that at this time the CIA "fought with the FBI over arresting Yousef in Pakistan—the CIA reportedly wanted to continue tracking him—and President Clinton was forced to intervene." (Friedman 3/17/1995) Yousef is rendered to the US the next day and makes a partial confession while flying there (see February 8, 1995).



Ramzi Yousef apprehended. [Source: Public domain]

After February 7, 1995-January 1996: Ramzi Yousef Arrest Points Investigators to KSM

Shortly after bomber Ramzi Yousef is arrested (see February 7, 1995), investigators discover a computer file of a letter on his laptop that is signed by "Khalid Sheikh, and Bojinka." An eyewitness account of the arrest is given to Time magazine by a "Khalid Sheikh," who is also staying in the same building. (McDermott 2005, pp. 154, 162) Investigators also discover that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM) had frequently visited Yousef's apartment in Manila, Philippines, where the bombs for the Bojinka plot were being made. (PBS Frontline 10/3/2002) They also find Yousef has multiple fax and phone numbers for a "Khalid Doha." Doha is the capital of Qatar. KSM has been living there openly since 1992 (see 1992-1995). Shortly after being apprehended, US authorities notice that Yousef calls one of these numbers in Qatar and asks to speak to a "Khalid." The US already connected KSM to the 1993 WTC bombing just weeks after that attack and knew that he was living in Doha, Qatar (see March 20, 1993). (US Congress 7/24/2003) There is an entry in Yousef's seized telephone directory for a Zahid Shaikh Mohammed, Yousef's uncle and KSM's brother. Not long after this discovery is made, Pakistani investigators raid Zahid's offices in Peshawar, Pakistan, but Zahid has already fled (see 1988-Spring 1995). In 1993, US investigators already discovered the connections

between Yousef, Zahid, and KSM, after raiding Zahid's house in Pakistan and finding pictures of them (see Spring 1993). (McDermott 2005, pp. 154, 162) The FBI successfully arranges for a photograph to be taken of KSM. He is positively identified from the photo in December 1995. This results in his indictment in January 1996 for his role in the 1993 WTC bombing. US intelligence labels him a "top priority," according the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry. (McDermott, Meyer, and McDonnell 12/22/2002; US Congress 7/24/2003)

February 7, 1995: Ramzi Yousef Rendered to US

After Ramzi Yousef is arrested in Pakistan (see February 7, 1995), he is rendered to the US. He is read his rights before he boards the rendition flight and, as author Peter Lance will later comment, "at that time, in February 1995, the Justice Department was still quite scrupulous about the due process issues, so much so that after Yousef was led onto the plane [US agents] read him his Miranda warnings a second time." (Lance 2006, pp. 203) The aircraft used for the rendition belongs to the US Air Force and the operation is run by FBI manager Neil Herman. The plane is moved to a "quiet area" of Islamabad airport and, according to author Simon Reeve, Yousef is then "bundled on to the jet." (Reeve 1999, pp. 107) National Security Council official Daniel Benjamin will explain why Yousef and Mir Aimal Kasi (see January 25, 1993) are not extradited in the normal manner, but rendered: "Both were apprehended in Pakistan, whose leaders decided that the nation would rather not have those two—folk heroes to some—sitting in jail, awaiting extradition. Pakistan's leaders feared that cooperating with the United States would be dangerously unpopular, so they wanted the suspects out of the country quickly." (Benjamin 10/21/2007) Yousef makes a partial confession while being flown to the US (see February 8, 1995).

February 8, 1995: Yousef Makes Partial Confession but Hides Bojinka Second Wave and Ties to Bin Laden and KSM

One day after Ramzi Yousef is arrested in Pakistan (see February 7, 1995), he makes a partial confession while being flown to the US. Due to the speed of events, only two US officials, FBI agent Chuck Stern and Secret Service agent Brian Parr, sit with Yousef during the flight. Both officials had been part of the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) operation to catch him, and they have many questions for him.

Confession - Yousef, under the mistaken impression that anything he says to them is not admissible in court if no notes or recordings are taken, talks to them for six hours. He confesses to bombing the WTC (see February 26, 1993). He says he tried to shear the support columns holding up one tower so it could fall into the other and kill up to 250,000 people. When asked who funded him, he says he had been given money by friends and family, but refuses to elaborate. (Reeve 1999, pp. 107-109) In fact, the agents secretly take notes and they will be used as evidence in Yousef's trial.

Comment on WTC - As Yousef is flying over New York City on his way to a prison cell, an FBI agent asks him, "You see the Trade Centers down there, they're still standing, aren't they?" Yousef responds, "They wouldn't be if I had enough money and enough explosives." (Hansen 9/23/2001; Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, pp. 135)

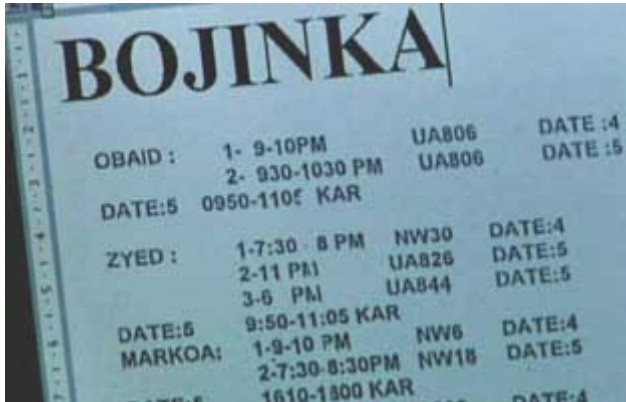
Some Information Forthcoming, Other Information Withheld - Yousef also soon admits to ties with Wali Khan Amin Shah, who fought with Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, and Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, one of bin Laden's brothers-in-law, who is being held by the US at this time (see December 16, 1994-May 1995). But although Yousef talks freely, he makes no direct mention of bin Laden, or the planned second wave of Operation Bojinka that closely parallels the later 9/11 plot (see Spring 1995). (Lance 2003, pp. 297-98) He also fails to mention his uncle, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM), who is still at large and was a co-mastermind in most of Yousef's plots. When talking about his preparations to assassinate President Clinton in Manila (see September 18-November 14, 1994), Yousef makes a vague mention of an "intermediary" who is actually KSM, but refuses to discuss him any further. (Gunaratna 2003, pp. xxiv-xxv) However, Yousef's arrest will soon lead investigators to KSM in other ways (see After February 7, 1995-January 1996).

February 21, 1995: Mysterious US Militant Arrested on Minor Charges, Disappears from View

Abu Ubaidah Yahya, an ex-US marine tied to many of the "Landmarks" bombers, is arrested and charged with gun running. According to charges, Yahya bought at least six assault weapons at a Virginia gun show in November 1992 and then later distributed them to a group of militants he was training at a training camp near New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania (see Late 1992-Early 1993). A number of the "Landmarks" bombers trained there and prosecutors claim the training was part of the overall "Landmarks" conspiracy, but strangely, Yahya is only charged with the gun running and not the training, even though the FBI actually

briefly monitored him running the training camp (see January 16-17, 1993). Yahya, a US citizen who changed his name from Karl Dexter Taylor, runs a martial arts school in Brooklyn. (King 2/21/1995; McKinley 2/22/1995) Yahya apparently fought in Bosnia for the Bosnian Muslims while the US government was secretly supporting the Bosnian Muslim cause (see Spring 1993). He was security chief for the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, a charity front linked to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see 1986-1993). He also transported money for the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) charity front (see Early April 1993) while the US government was deliberately turning a blind eye to its actions (see 1993). What happens next to Yahya is unclear. While the Lexis Nexus database reveals a number of articles about his arrest, there are no articles mentioning any subsequent trial or imprisonment.


Spring 1995: More Evidence that WTC Remains a Target



One of the Bojinka documents found. This Word document apparently lists flight times. [Source: CBC]

In the wake of uncovering the Operation Bojinka plot, Philippine authorities find a letter on a computer disc written by the plotters of the failed 1993 WTC bombing. This letter apparently was never sent, but its contents will be revealed in 1998 congressional testimony. (US Congress 2/24/1998) The Manila police chief also reports discovering a statement from bin Laden around this time that, although they failed to blow up the WTC in 1993, “on the second attempt they would be successful.” (Agence France-Presse 9/13/2001)

March 4, 1995: Deputy Attorney General Extends ‘Wall’ for WTC Bombing Cases

Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick issues a memo establishing procedures to regulate prosecutors’ and criminal investigators’ access to intelligence information generated in the wake of the 1993 WTC bombing cases (see February 26, 1993). These new procedures effectively extend the so-called “wall” that arose in the early 1980s. During the criminal investigation of the bombing, the FBI came across counterintelligence information related to Islamic extremists operating inside the United States, so it began an intelligence investigation. The new procedures are established because the Justice Department does not want to be perceived as using warrants issued under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which are thought to be easier to obtain than criminal warrants, to further the criminal investigations, because this might possibly lead to problems in court (see Early 1980s). In the memo, Gorelick, who will later be a 9/11 Commissioner (see December 16, 2002), acknowledges that the procedures go “beyond what is legally required.” (US Department of Justice 11/2004, pp. 28 ; Lance 2006, pp. 549-550) A similar set of controversial procedures is issued later covering all intelligence investigations (see July 19, 1995). However, Andrew McCarthy, one of the WTC prosecutors cut off from the information, will later say this policy is “excessively prohibitive” and “virtually guaranteed intelligence failure” in the fight against terrorism. McCarthy will also note that there already are procedures in place to prevent the misuse of FISA-derived evidence. (McCarthy 4/19/2004)

1997-2002: ‘Blind Sheikh’ Continues to Head Global Jihad Movement from Inside Maximum Security Prison

The ‘Blind Sheikh,’ Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, who has been in a maximum security facility since his conviction on terrorism charges in the mid 1990s, communicates with his supporters through his legal team, radical attorney Lynne Stewart, paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar, and interpreter Mohamed Yousry. Abdul-Rahman, who is held at the Supermax prison in Colorado and then at a medical facility in Minnesota, has no access to the outside world except through the team and he uses them to pass on advice. Author Peter Bergen will comment: “Sheikh Abdul-Rahman’s incarceration has not prevented him from communicating important messages to his followers through his family or lawyers; for instance, in 1997 he endorsed a ceasefire between the Egyptian government and the terrorist Islamic Group. Then in 2000 Sheikh Abdul-Rahman publicly withdrew his support from that ceasefire.” In addition, his will, which appears in 1998 and



Lynne Stewart. [Source: Robert Livingston/ public domain]

urges attacks against the US, may also be smuggled out by his legal team (see May 1998). However, passing on such information during the thrice-yearly visits is against the rules agreed for the visits. Stewart, who attempts to distract the prison guards while Abdul-Rahman passes on the messages, will be indicted in 2002 and found guilty on several charges, including conspiracy and providing material support to terrorists. She will be sentenced to 28 months in jail. (Cassel 10/12/2002; Fox News 2/11/2005; CNN 2/14/2005; Bergen 2006, pp. 208-9; McCarthy 10/17/2006) In 2001, one of the 9/11 hijackers, Mohand Alshehri, is reportedly seen near the Minnesota facility where Abdul-Rahman is being held (see August 2001).

October 2000: Book Favored by Prominent Neoconservatives Argues that Hussein Was Behind 1993 WTC Bombing



The book *Study of Revenge*. [Source: Public domain]

Laurie Mylroie, a researcher who held faculty positions at Harvard and the US Naval War College, publishes the book *Study of Revenge: Saddam Hussein's Unfinished War Against America*. She argues that the Iraqi government was behind the 1993 WTC bombing. The book is published by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a prominent neoconservative think tank, and her book has strong support from many important neoconservatives.

Lauded by Neoconservatives - Richard Perle calls the book "splendid and wholly convincing," while Paul Wolfowitz calls it a "provocative and disturbing book." Former CIA Director James Woolsey says, "Anyone who wishes to continue to deal with Saddam [Hussein] by ignoring his role in international terrorism...and by giving only office furniture to the Iraqi resistance now has the staggering task of trying to refute this superb work." In her acknowledgements, she thanks John Bolton, I. Lewis Libby, and Wolfowitz for their support and help in writing the book. All of them will go on to take prominent positions in the Bush administration.

Mylroie's Theories Discredited - But war correspondent and terrorism expert Peter Bergen will later comment, "Mylroie became enamored of her theory that Saddam was the mastermind of a vast anti-US terrorist conspiracy in the face of virtually all evidence and expert opinion to the contrary. In what amounts to the discovery of a unified field theory of terrorism, Mylroie believes that Saddam was not only behind the '93 Trade Center attack, but also every anti-American terrorist incident of the past decade..." Bergen will continue, "[B]y the mid-'90s, the Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York, the FBI, the US Attorney's office in the Southern District of New York, the CIA, the NSC, and the State Department had all found no evidence implicating the Iraqi government in the first Trade Center attack." Bergen will comment that normally a book like this would not have mattered, except that the neoconservatives "believed her theories, bringing her on as a consultant at the Pentagon, and they seem to continue to entertain her eccentric belief that Saddam is the fount of the entire shadow war against America." (Bergen 12/2003; Unger 2007, pp. 216)

No Credible Evidence of Iraqi Involvement in WTC Bombing - The book will be used as a lodestar of neoconservative thought when terrorists launch the 9/11 attacks, when neoconservatives inside and outside the Bush administration will pin the blame for the attacks on Iraq (see September 13, 2001). (Unger 2007, pp. 216) In 2004, the 9/11 Commission will conclude, "We have found no credible evidence to support theories of Iraqi government involvement in the 1993 WTC bombing." (9/11 Commission 7/24/2004, pp. 559)

February 2001: Former CIA Director Attempts to Link Iraqi Government to 1993 WTC Bombing

Former CIA director James Woolsey visits Britain to look for evidence tying Saddam Hussein to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. He is looking to support the theory (see Late July or Early August 2001) that Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind behind the 1993 WTC bombing, was actually an Iraqi agent who had assumed the identity of a Pakistani student named Abdul Basit. This theory was proposed in a 2000 book praised by Woolsey (see October 2000). He will also make a visit for the same purpose in the weeks after

9/11 (see Late September 2001). On at least one of the trips, Woolsey visits the Swansea Institute, where Basit studied, to see if Basit's fingerprints match those of Yousef, who is now serving a life sentence in a Colorado prison. Matching fingerprints would discredit the theory. According to Knight Ridder, "Several of those with knowledge of the trips said they failed to produce any new evidence that Iraq was behind the attacks." (Strobel 10/11/2001) But despite a lack of evidence, politicians in Washington interested in the theory will manage to reopen the files into Yousef around August 2001 anyway (see Late July or Early August 2001). An article by Woolsey pushing the theory about Yousef will be published just two days after 9/11 (see September 13, 2001).

April 30, 2001: Wolfowitz Claims that Iraq is Involved in Terrorism and Was Behind 1993 WTC Bombing

During a National Security Council deputy principals meeting on April 30, 2001, Paul Wolfowitz is challenged by White House counterterrorism advisor Richard Clarke after asserting that Iraq is involved in terrorism. Recalling the meeting, Clarke tells The Guardian in a March 2004 interview: "April was an initial discussion of terrorism policy writ large and at that meeting I said we had to talk about al-Qaeda. And because it was terrorism policy writ large [Paul] Wolfowitz said we have to talk about Iraqi terrorism and I said that's interesting because there hasn't been any Iraqi terrorism against the United States. There hasn't been any for 8 years. And he said something derisive about how I shouldn't believe the CIA and FBI, that they've been wrong. And I said if you know more than I know tell me what it is, because I've been doing this for 8 years and I don't know about any Iraqi-sponsored terrorism against the US since 1993. When I said let's start talking about bin Laden, he said bin Laden couldn't possibly have attacked the World Trade Center in '93. One little terrorist group like that couldn't possibly have staged that operation. It must have been Iraq." (Clarke 3/23/2004) During the same meeting, Wolfowitz also allegedly dismisses bin Laden and al-Qaeda as a serious threat (see April 30, 2001).

June 2001: Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz Asks CIA and DIA to Look into Theory that Iraq Masterminded 1993 Bombing of WTC

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz asks the CIA to look over the 2000 book, *Study of Revenge: Saddam Hussein's Unfinished War Against America* by Laurie Mylroie, which argued that Iraq was behind the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center (see October 2000). Wolfowitz will mention shortly after 9/11 how he asked the CIA to do this, but it is unknown what their response is. Presumably it is not one Wolfowitz liked. (9/11 Commission 7/24/2004, pp. 559) Wolfowitz also asks Thomas Wilson, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), to have his analysts look at the book. The DIA is unable to find any evidence that support the theory. (Isikoff and Corn 2006, pp. 76) Around late July, the US reopens the files on WTC bomber Ramzi Yousef, presumably in response to these requests (see Late July or Early August 2001). But no evidence will be found to support Mylroie's theory that Yousef was an Iraqi agent. The 9/11 Commission will conclude in 2004, "We have found no credible evidence to support theories of Iraqi government involvement in the 1993 WTC bombing." (9/11 Commission 7/24/2004, pp. 559)

Late July or Early August 2001: US Authorities Look into Theory that Iraq Had Role in 1993 WTC Bombing



Laurie Mylroie. [Source: Publicity photo]

US authorities re-open the files on Ramzi Yousef, the convicted mastermind of the WTC bombing in 1993, and begin looking into the theory that Yousef may have actually been an Iraqi agent. Presumably this is in response to requests by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz the month before to look into the matter (see June 2001). Yousef was convicted in 1996 (see September 5, 1996) and has been in custody since 1995 (see February 7, 1995). According to the official version of events, Yousef's real name is Abdul Basit, a 27-year-old Pakistani who until 1989 was a computer student studying in South Wales. In late 2000, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) published *Study of Revenge: Saddam Hussein's Unfinished War Against America* arguing in support of the theory that Yousef was actually an Iraqi agent (see October 2000). The book, written by AEI scholar Laurie Mylroie, says that Basit was living with his parents in Kuwait in 1990 when Iraq invaded the country (see November 8, 1990). During the occupation, Iraqis presumably murdered him and his family and then altered police files so Iraqi intelligence could use his identity. (Woolsey 9/13/2001; McGrory

9/22/2001) In February 2001, former CIA Director James Woolsey traveled to Britain in an attempt to find evidence to support this theory (see February 2001). But Mylroie's theory is debunked by authorities who match the fingerprints of Yousef to those of Basit. (Bergen 12/2003; Isikoff and Corn 2006, pp. 81)

2002-2004: World Trade Center Bombers Encourage Jihad from inside Maximum Security Facility

Three of the men convicted for the World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993)—Mohammed Salameh, Mahmud Abouhalima, and Nidal Ayyad—are allowed to write about 90 letters from inside the Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado, encouraging fellow extremists around the world. Some of the letters are sent to Morocco and some to a militant cell in Spain. In one, addressed to cell leader Mohamed Achraf, who will be arrested in late 2004 for attempting to blow up the National Justice Building in Madrid (see July-October 18, 2004), Salameh writes, "Oh, God, make us live with happiness. Make us die as martyrs. May we be united on the day of judgment." Other recipients have links to the 2004 Madrid train bombings (see 7:37-7:42 a.m., March 11, 2004). One of Salameh's letters, in which he calls Osama bin Laden "the hero of my generation," is published in a newspaper in July 2002, but this does not result in any new security attempts to stop other letters. The letters urge readers to "terminate the infidels" because "Muslims don't have any option other than jihad." Former prosecutor Andrew McCarthy wonders, "He was exhorting acts of terrorism and helping recruit would-be terrorists for the jihad from inside an American prison." Terrorism specialist Hedieth Mirahmadi says the letters would have been especially useful for recruitment because the convicted bombers have "a power that the average person or the average imam in a mosque doesn't have." Attorney General Alberto Gonzales will later comment, "I was surprised. Didn't seem to make any sense to me and I'm sure the average American would have to wonder, 'How could this happen?'" Staff at the prison noticed the letters were unmonitored and complained in 2003, but it apparently took management several months to impose a tighter regime. (Myers 3/1/2005; Myers 3/9/2005)

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Timelines](#) | [Forum](#) | [Development](#) | [Donate](#) | [Contact](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)



Except where otherwise noted, the *textual* content of *each* timeline is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike